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# LITTLE PRUDY'S CHILDREN

# WEE LUCY

By

Sophie May

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# WEE LUCY

*LITTLE PRUDY'S "WEE CROODLIN' DOO"*

BY

SOPHIE MAY

AUTHOR OF "LITTLE PRUDY STORIES" "DOTTY DIMPLE STORIES" "LITTLE PRUDY'S FLYAWAY SERIES" "FLAXIE FRIZZLE SERIES" "THE QUINNEBASSET SERIES" ETC.

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TO

# The Children

OF THOSE WHO STILL REMEMBER AND LOVE

"LITTLE PRUDY"

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# WEE LUCY

## I

### WEE LUCY AND JIMMY–BOY

WEE LUCY DUNLEE was in the garden kneeling before a rosebush. It was a tall bush, much higher than herself. It bore cream-white roses with little dashes of pink on their petals; but the buds were like Lucy's cheeks, "pink, only pink, love's rosy pink."

Lucy called it *her* rosebush, and often stood and talked to it. Once her mother, Mrs. Prudy Parlin Dunlee, had heard her say, "Pitty yosy, *I* bringed you down when I camed from heaven."

To-day she was telling the rosebush the same story over again. And always after Lucy had told a story several times she began to believe it.

"Yes," said she to Jimmy-boy, her brother, who was marching about the garden in a suit of new clothes, "yes, I did, Jimmy; I bringed it down from heaven."

"Poh, you're a funny girl! You didn't do any such thing!"

"Oh, but I did, I 'member," said Lucy, looking up to the sky and winking slowly and thoughtfully.

From that moment she 'membered very clearly all about it. How she had once lived up in heaven in God's house, and how by and by she had flewed down through the blue sky with her arms full of roses.

Lucy was only three years old. She lived in a pleasant city in California, where there is never any snow, and where flowers grow

out of doors all winter. Her father's house stood upon a hill. It was a straw-colored house, and had a round tower at the south with three bay windows in it, one above another.

In the highest room in this round tower, the blue room, sat Aunt Vi for hours at a time with her writing. She wrote stories, and sometimes read them aloud to the children.

When Lucy was not chasing horned toads, or playing with Jimmy or Edith, she liked to run up to the blue room to chat with Auut Vi. But often Aunt Vi was too busy to see her; and then the door was locked, and after knocking and knocking Lucy had to go away. This she did not like or understand.

"Why *for* couldn't she come in? *She* wouldn't talk!" All she wanted was to be allowed to dip sticks and straws and hair-

pins into auntie's inkstand. An inkstand is the best kind of plaything if anybody will only give you plenty of white paper to go with it. Lucy liked to draw ink pictures on the paper, and see them run in lovely black streams! Auntie did not admire these pictures, and was unkind about the inkstand and the paper. Still, as she was a very good woman on the whole, Lucy tried her best to forgive her.

To-day the little girl went up to give Aunt Vi some of her roses. The door of the blue room stood wide open. Miss Elvira was not writing; she was putting some bows of red ribbon on a very large red flannel stocking.

"Christmas is coming," said she, "and this is a Santa Claus stocking."

Lucy had not thought much about Christmas before. Now she looked at the stocking and exclaimed,

"O auntie! what makes Sandy Claw have such big feet?"

Miss Dunlee laughed. "He won't *wear* this stocking, dear. It's only made to hold the Christmas presents."

"Whose pyesents?"

"Jimmy-boy's."

"And where'll *my* pyesents be? Won't I have a Sandy Claw stocking too?"

"To be sure. Yours will be a blue one, because we call you 'Baby-blue-eye,' you know."

Lucy was charmed. She liked to be called a Baby-blue-eye, for it is one of the prettiest wild flowers that grows.

"And will the stocking have a blue bow on?" she asked.

"Yes. Here is the bow on the table; don't you see? All ready to go on. Now I'll cut out the stocking this minute."

And "snip, snip" went Aunt Vi's scissors

in some soft blue flannel. Lucy looked on well pleased.

"When will Sandy Claw come?"

"In two days after this."

"I fink he's dreffful slow, auntie."

"Oh, two days will soon be gone. Now, what do you want him to put in your stocking?"

"I know, I know. I'll go tell him; I'll tell him lots of fings."

So saying, Lucy danced out of the door.

"Where is that child going?" thought Aunt Vi, as she heard the little feet pattering down the stairs.

She was going to the telephone. The telephone was in the front hall, and she climbed a chair and talked into its ear.

"Hello; that you, Sandy Claw? Bring me a lady doll and a gemplum doll, and"—

"A gentleman doll?" asked a laughing voice.

Lucy thought it was Santa Claus's voice, and turned around quickly; but there stood Mr. Henry Sanford, that was all.

"What do you want of a gentleman doll, Snippet? Are any of your little ones going to be married?"

Lucy looked up very seriously.

"My Fibby is, but I isn't. I sha'n't ever be mallied; *I* shall be a *widow*."

She had just learned that her dear friends, Mrs. Chick and Mrs. Pope, were both widows, and she liked the sound of the word.

The young man caught up the tiny creature in his arms, and spun her about the room merrily.

"Hey, my little widow, ho, my little widow, is your Aunt Vi up stairs? and will you go call her?"

"Yes, Mr. Sanford, I'll go; but she's drefful busy making shoes and stockings."

"Indeed, I never knew she was a shoe-

maker! But I'm in a hurry, Snippet. Run and tell her to come right now."

Lucy ran, followed by the dog Punch.

"Come down *yight nowly*, Aunt Vi," she called out.

Edith heard her from the pavement where she was riding her tricycle. Jimmy heard her from the garden.

"Come *yight nowly*," repeated Jimmy-boy, mockingly, to all in the house who might hear; "come see my sailor suit, my sailor suit."

He had worn his new blue jacket and blue trousers about an hour, but to his chagrin every one was busy to-day; not a soul could stop to admire him as much as he wished and deserved.

"You'd better come into the house, little Gineral," called Molly O'Connor, "or you'll get them clo'es wet."

The sun, which generally shines in Cali-

fornia, was not shining just then, and there was a fine, a very fine, drizzle of mist. Jimmy came in at once.

"I don't think they are hurt," said he, feeling the jacket and trousers carefully with both hands.

Aunt Vi and Mr. Sanford were in the library talking about Christmas. Lucy had wandered into the parlor, and Jimmy went and stood beside her in the bay window. He and Lucy were very fond of being together, and Jimmy liked to instruct his little sister. He could not instruct Edith, for Edith was two years older than himself; or Kyzie, for Kyzie was six years older, almost grown up. But he felt very wise when he talked with wee Lucy.

As they looked out of the window now at the dull sky, Lucy asked anxiously, "Will Sandy Claw go yidin' in the *weather?*"

"You mean, will Santa Claus come if it

rains? I s'pose that's what you mean. A girl three years old ought to talk better than you do, Lucy."

"Will Sandy Claw come if it rains?" returned Lucy meekly. "Say, will he?"

"Yes, I s'pose so. *He* doesn't mind weather and rain and things," said Jimmy, though he did not feel quite sure of it, not as sure as he wished he did.

Lucy clapped her hands and laughed till her silken rings of hair danced on her forehead.

"I said '*s'pose*,' I didn't say '*sure*,' Lucy Dunlee."

The ringlets ceased to dance; and little Lucy turned around so distressed a face that Jimmy hastened to add, "Oh, he'll come fast enough; he's awful tough."

"Will he come from heaven?"

"From heaven? Why, *he* isn't an angel! He doesn't live *there!*"

Jimmy was rather shocked.

"Di'n't I see Sandy Claw up in heaven? I fink so," said wee Lucy, wrinkling her forehead and trying to 'member that far off time when she had "flewed" down from the sky with her arms full of roses. "I fink I saw Sandy 'way up in heaven."

"What a goosie!" said Jimmy. "You make up things in your head, and then you 'member' 'em, and then you think they're true."

But seeing a tear trembling in the child's eyes, Jimmy threw his arms about her and said soothingly, —

"Don't cry and I'll tell you all about Santa Claus."

"Oh, did you see him, Jimmy?"

"No-o, not 'zac'ly; but I've seen a picture of him lots of times."

Here, after some search in a box on a high bracket, Jimmy found at last an old Christ-

mas card with a picture of jolly old Santa Claus and his six reindeer prancing over the roof of a house.

"That's snow top o' that house, Lucy. Snow is awful cold stuff, but it won't freeze *him* any."

"Will it freeze his hosses any?"

"No, those horses are deers. Not burros or broncos, just *deers*. Deers won't freeze."

"Pretty deers," murmured Lucy; "trees on their heads."

"Not trees, goosie! That's their hookers! Deers have hookers same as cows, only not *like* cows."

"Where they goin', those deers?"

"Down that chimney, I *s'pose*. Seems queer though," mused the little boy, in whose mind a slight doubt had been rising of late regarding the cheery old saint. "Seems queer he could go down a chimney; but they say he

does. He came down ours last year, and brought us a heap of things."

"Was he the man painted our house? Yes, I 'member, he painted it all up. Good Sandy Claw," said Lucy, smiling softly.

All in a moment, as she spoke, Jimmy's face grew sad. In spite of his great joy in his new clothes, it grew very sad indeed.

A new and dread alarm had seized the boy. He slipped out of the parlor, and ran into the kitchen to Molly, who was making mince-pies. He felt as if he must see somebody that minute, and ask a very important question.

"Molly, O Molly!" said he in a choked voice, "don't you know the men have been painting our house?"

"Well, yes, to be sure, little Gineral, and a purty color 'tis too; all like coffee and crame."

"But, Molly! Oh, see here, Molly! Santa Claus thinks it's *white!* It used to be white.

I'm afraid he won't know it; I'm afraid he'll drive right by."

Molly might have laughed if she had not had so kind a heart; but seeing that the little fellow was really distressed, she said soothingly, at the same time giving him a handful of raisins, —

"Niver you fret about that, little Gineral. Santa Claus is rale quick-witted. He'd find *your* house if it was painted up and wheeled off to Africky. Didn't you niver hear about his eyes? It's jist like an owl's eyes they are, made so's to see in the night, right through the top o' the house!"

Jimmy's heart grew light again.

"Will he come certain true, and not miss?"

"Yis, as certain true as your name's Gineral Jimmy Dunlee. So now be off wid ye, me darlint. Did Molly O'Connor iver tell ye a lie?"

## II

### SANTA CLAUS AT BREAKFAST

"If he can see right *through* the house, it's no matter *what* color the house is," thought Jimmy, and was perfectly happy all day.

But at tea-time, when his father said, "Jamie doesn't look like the same boy in that new suit," a fresh doubt arose.

"I never thought about *that*, mamma," said he, stealing up to her side after tea. "*Has* Santa Claus got owl's eyes? Will he know me in my new clo'es?"

Mrs. Dunlee smiled down on her little boy roguishly.

"Santa Claus knows *good* children, even if they are wrapped up in rabbit-skins. It's his *business* to know good children."

Jimmy was satisfied then, and drew a sigh of relief. For wasn't he one of the good children that it was Santa Claus's business to know? I should hope so, indeed.

"I'll catch that old fellow to-night, see if I don't," thought Jimmy. "No use in his being so sly."

"Come, all you dear ones," said mamma; "bring your chairs this way. Papa and I have something we wish to say to you."

It was a pleasant little group that drew about the fire; so thought the parents, and so thought Aunt Vi. Katharine, the eldest, eleven years old, oftenest called Kyzie, a sweet, dark-eyed girl, who thought much and talked little; merry Edith, aged seven, who always spoke before she thought; Jimmy-boy, all smiles in his new suit; last of all, golden-haired Lucy, little more than a baby.

Lucy did not bring her chair. She sprang into papa's arms, and made him bend his head

to let her kiss the "pitty bald spot" on his crown, as big as a dime.

"Your father and I have been talking about Christmas," said Mrs. Dunlee. "He will tell you now what we have been saying."

"Will he, indeed?" said Mr. Dunlee, laughing. "Why, everybody knows that mamma can talk better than I can."

And he waved his hand toward her for her to begin.

"Well, then," said mamma, "we have been saying that we hope you children will all like your presents this year."

"Oh, we shall, we shall!" cried Edith; but as soon as she had spoken she blushed, and so did Kysie.

Kysie remembered that last year she had wished for more books and different ones. Edith remembered that she had found fault with her new cloak, which was not just like Gertie Mercer's.

"And now your papa says that since Santa Claus tries so hard to please you" —

"I luf him, oh, I do, I do," broke in little Lucy.

"As Santa Claus tries so hard to please you, we hope you'll try to be pleased."

"Why, we will, of course we will!" cried Edith and Kysie, looking more and more ashamed.

"And — and" — began mamma again, "if you don't like your presents" —

She paused and looked at her husband, who said, —

"Ah, Prudy, must I be the one to tell it?" Then to the children he added, —

"I'll explain it to you. If we hear you complaining of a present this year, mamma and I have decided that we shall take it away and give it to some poor child who will know how to enjoy it. Are you willing? Will that be right? Speak, and tell us what you think;

for Christmas is almost here, and we want to start fair."

"Yes, that will be right; we are willing," said the two older girls, who thought their father could do no wrong. Was he not a clergyman? and are not clergymen the best people in the world?

"And what have you to say, Jimmy-boy?" asked his mother. "Are you willing too?"

"Course I am. I shall like *my* presents though, same's I always do."

Lucy was playing with the cat and not listening. She thought people said a great many stupid things; and though not at all sleepy, she was soon willing to have Kyzie lead her away to bed.

"Good-night, everybody. I hope I'll sleep well," were her parting words.

She had been taught to say, "I hope *you'll* sleep well;" but it was funnier the way she said it, and no one ever corrected her.

"Now sing the shadow verse, please," said she to Kyzie, when she had been tucked into her crib.

"Fear not the shadows, for God sees
As though it were not night.
To make our sleep more sweet and calm,
He takes away the light,"

sang Kyzie; then turned down the gas, and left the happy little one to dream of "Sandy Claw."

The next night but one was the very "night before Christmas." Jimmy went to bed earlier than usual, and his mother and Lucy went up-stairs with him, Lucy carrying the big red stocking with the red bow.

"It had to be pretty big. I'm going to have a Christmas to-morrow and a birthday too. Hurrah," exclaimed Jimmy, as Mrs. Dunlee hung the stocking over the bellows.

After he had said his prayers and got into bed, he laughed for nearly half a minute.

"What amuses you, dear?" asked mamma.

"O, I was thinking how silly I was to be afraid Santa Claus wouldn't know me! I've got my new clo'es *off* now, and of course he'll know me! When I'm in bed I look like 'the same boy,' *don't* I, mamma?"

Then he gazed hard at the fireplace. It was a pretty one with pictured tiles. But how was a fat man to crawl through that small chimney, a very fat man with a pack on his back?

"Whew, there's something awful funny about that," said Jimmy, winking fast. "He's so sly too; always coming in the night when you're asleep. Did you ever try to catch him, mamma?"

"O yes, Susy and I used to try."

"Well, little girls can't; I s'pose it takes a boy to do it. I'm going to catch him this time. I said I would. I won't shut my eyes, see if I do."

"Won't shut *my* eyes needer," echoed Lucy.

Mrs. Dunlee kissed Jimmy over and over again, — oh, if he had only known how she loved him! — and said,

"Now, good-night, my son. Lucy and I are going."

"O mamma, you're turning off the gas! I can't catch him in the dark. Didn't Grandma Parlin let the Parlin children have a *little* light the night before Christmas?"

"Sometimes she did," replied Mrs. Prudy, smiling, and wondering if children are just alike all the world over. "You'll never be five years old again, Jimmy; this is the last time you'll ever try to catch Santa Claus, so you may have a little light, and lie awake till sunrise — *if you can!*"

She left a tiny point glowing like a sleepy star in a cloudy sky — but enough to show Jimmy his fireplace and his stocking — and went away, with Lucy chattering and clinging to her forefinger.

"See, wee Lucy, I put your Santa Claus stocking at the foot of your crib. It's every bit as big as Jimmy's red one."

"But I isn't going into my crib, mamma. *I* sha'n't go to sleep. Mayn't I sit up in my little chair and catch Sandy Claw, same as Jimmy?"

"Dear me, if you don't sleep, how can you wake up pleasant?"

"Can't I?"

"Indeed you can't. And only think of *not* waking up pleasant on a Christmas Day!"

Lucy looked thoughtful.

"Well, will you call me, mamma, when Sandy Claw comes down?"

"Yes," replied Mrs. Prudy, laughing, and thinking again of her own fairy days of childhood, "*if I see him*, I will call you, dear."

Little Lucy went to bed with a happy sigh. Nothing more was heard from her till about four o'clock next morning, when she hopped

out of her crib, and woke her father with a loud kiss.

"Has Sandy Claw camed, papa? Cause I's waked up a-all pyeasant."

"Hush, hush," said tired, sleepy papa. He did not quite know whether it was his little girl talking to him or a fly buzzing in his ear.

"Waked up a-all pyeasant, Fibby too," said the child, flirting her black doll into his eyes. "Fibby's woked up a-all pyeasant. Got her toof-ache, Fibby has, but she's smilin' all a same."

Mr. Dunlee laughed, sleepy as he was, to fancy that hideous black Phebe "waking up pleasant." Her red silk smile was dreadful at any time, and what must it be when she had toothache? But now he was glad she was smiling in the dark, where no one could see her.

"Lucy," said Mrs. Dunlee in a weak voice, for her head ached, "go back to your crib."

"Well, well; but, mamma, you telled me to wake up pyeasant, and I waked up just as pyeasant! And now I can't see my stockin' nor noffin'! O de-ar, *dear*, *de*-ar!"

"There, I can't bear that," said Mr. Dunlee, springing up and hurrying on his clothes, "the child mustn't begin the day crying."

"But she will have to be dressed," said Mrs. Dunlee, "or she may take cold."

Mr. Dunlee was a wise man, but with all his learning he had no idea how to dress his baby. Still, as his wife was sick, he would have to try. He took up one tiny garment after another, and looked at it, much puzzled, while little Lucy kept exclaiming,

"Why, papa, *that* isn't the firstest thing! *That* isn't the nextest thing — you d'ess me *so* bad! Why, papa!"

"Well, never mind," said papa, drawing a long breath, "they're all on at last, and now we'll go."

He took her down in his arms, Santa Claus stocking and all, and lighted the gas in the back parlor.

"We'll keep very still; we don't want to wake anybody, you know, Lucy."

She was opening the blue Christmas stocking. Did he think she was going to keep still? Why, that stocking was stuffed full of everything nice. How could she help dancing and singing and shouting?

"Oh, crowds o' candy, papa! Crowds o' pictures, papa! Oh, see my new doggy, see him go! See my new dolly, got watch on! Look, papa, look!"

There were treasures enough to last Lucy for hours, and I don't know what made her father tell her there was anything else. He ought to have waited at least till daylight. But he said, without stopping to think,

"Yes, Pet; but what's this on the sofa?"

It was a box directed to "Wee Lucy," which Mrs. Dunlee had saved for the Christmas-tree.

"Oh, oh, oh!" cried Lucy, dropping the toys she had been hugging and kissing, and tearing the wrapper off the box.

This was best of all. A pretty tablecloth with fine fringed napkins all folded in silver napkin-rings; and pretty china dishes painted with pink and gold flowers! Lucy went nearly wild with joy. And what do you think? She wanted a party that minute.

"Please give me some water, papa, to put in my teapot. My name's Uncle Smif. I'll have a party for you *now*. Cake and pies and ollinges, an' — an'" —

She did not know how tired and sleepy her father was. And if she had known I fear she would not have cared. Little folks seem to think Christmas belongs to them-

selves, and not at all to their parents. Isn't this so?

Dear papa brought water for the teapot, and found some tiny crackers to put on the plates; but Lucy would have to make believe the other things, he said.

"Well, I'm Uncle Smif; and you is Sandy Claw, that's what *you* is, papa. You mus' sit down in this chair yight here," said Lucy, putting the dishes on her little table with a great clatter.

Papa sat down.

"Now talk, Sandy Claw, talk o' somefin."

"What shall I say? How d' do, Mr. Smith?"

"Pitty well, Mr. Sandy. Talk some more," said Lucy, tipping the tiny teapot.

"Well, how's your father?"

"My papa is in heavens, my mamma is in heavens. But my husband, *she* is *dead*."

Then Mr. Smith gave his guest a cup of

tea. It was "make-believe" strong and "make-believe" sweet, but it couldn't keep Sandy Claus awake.

"Take some eggs, an' some oatmeal and some butter, Mr. Sandy. Oh, you was a good man to come down the chimney all in a dark night, and I luf you. Where's your little deers?"

There was no reply. Uncle Wee Lucy Smith stared at his guest, and dropped the teapot in surprise. Sandy's eyes were tightly closed. And just then the pink and gold cup, with its very strong tea, fell out of his hand and rolled down upon the rug.

Ah yes, Christmas had hardly begun, the little folks in town were still in bed. Yet here was Santa Claus, who had forgotten them all, and finished his breakfast, and gone to sleep in his chair.

## III

### SANTA CLAUS JONES

MR. DUNLEE woke as soon as Lucy ceased to talk. He woke, rolled the child in a shawl and placed her on the sofa, where she might have had a long nap, if Jimmy-boy had not aroused her by his shrill little shout,

"Hurrah for me! Five years old! Five years old!"

He was always proud of his birthday. How wise he had been to have it on Christmas, the very best day in the year!

"Well, I'm *free* my own self," answered Lucy, springing up in haste. "But *did* you see Sandy Claw?"

"No-o; 'twasn't light much, and I forgot to look," said Jimmy.

"Well, he's been here all-a-same!"

But wee Lucy's voice was quite drowned; for Jimmy had begun to name his presents one by one, and flourish them over her head.

"My jack-in-the-box, my toy-engine, my donny-moes, my" —

There was no sleep in the house after this. Everybody had to see and admire the children's presents. There were enough of these to last through the day, so Mrs. Dunlee thought, and she did not wish Jimmy and Lucy to know that more were to come in the evening.

She had not meant that Edith should know it either, but Edith usually found out everything. She had espied the Christmas-tree leaning against a crib in the stable, not two hours after John, the servant-man, had brought it home.

She went and told Kyzie. This was exactly what might have been expected of her, and

did not matter so very much, for Kyzie would not have told the little ones. But when the tree was brought into the parlor in the afternoon and a curtain was drawn before it, Edith flew about with an anxious, important air.

"Jimmy," said she, "you must not go into the parlor. Mamma and Aunt Vi are putting presents and little dots of candles on the tree."

"What tree?" asked Jimmy.

"Why, the Christmas — oh, I didn't mean to tell!"

The secret was out then, of course; and next minute Lucy knew it, and Mrs. Dunlee had to leave everything and try to quiet her.

"Will Sandy Claw come down *again?*" asked the little girl, catching her breath. "*Now* I'll see him! Where'll he fall *into*, mamma? O, I know, into *sky-hole!*"

Her mother laughed. She did not know

what the baby meant by "sky-hole." But Lucy meant the roof-window of the attic. She fancied that Santa would come with cap and big "whicksers" on like those in the picture, and "yide" on the top of the house, and by and by tumble down through the "sky-hole," presents and all. And somehow the presents would alight on the Christmas-tree, and hang there in beautiful clusters.

Kind old man to come so far! For Lucy had found out now where he lived. He lived up in the moon. The more she thought about it, the more distinctly she could seem to see him riding over the clouds, which were made of cold, cold snow.

"O mamma!" she cried, her little heart overflowing with pity and love, "Sandy's so good, mayn't I give him a present?"

"I'll sing him a Christmas song," said Mrs. Dunlee, taking up her guitar. "Won't that do just as well?"

She sang:—

"Carol, Christians, carol,
Carol joyfully,
Carol the good tidings,
Carol merrily,
And pray a gladsome Christmas
To all good Christian men;
Carol, Christians, carol
Christmas Day again."

Now what was the matter? It was a pleasant song. Lucy had always liked it; and mamma had a voice like a bird. What could have happened just then to spoil it all, and grieve our joyous little Lucy? I am sure you will never guess.

She was jealous of the guitar!

A minute ago her face had been all smiles; now two round tears rolled down her cheeks, and she looked up at her mother with a glance of reproach.

"Don't sing to Getty, mamma," — she called the guitar Getty, — "don't sing to Getty, mamma! Oh, dee, *dee*-ah me!"

Strange to say there were times when Lucy could not bear to see Getty in Mrs. Dunlee's arms, to be sung to and smiled upon like this. *She* wanted to sit in mamma's arms herself, and cuddle her little head in mamma's neck, and be sung to and petted. The guitar made a fine little tinkling sound when mamma touched it, just as if it were alive, and felt happy and so glad to be touched! What a queer fancy of Lucy's!

"Oh, *dee*, dee-ah me!"

That fine tinkle was dreadful. It made Lucy long to throw the happy Getty, the bad Getty, out of the window, or do something else to it to hurt it and make it "squeam."

"Naughty fing! Ought to stay in box ahind the peenano. Why for did it get in mamma's arms, and cuddle up to her cheek?" thought wee Lucy.

She stamped her foot. Mamma's arms were

not made to hold great, big, homely things like Getty; they were made to hold dear, precious things like Lucy.

"Wish Sandy Claw would come down and take it away! I fink 'twould be good plan," sobbed the angry baby.

Mrs. Dunlee tried not to listen. She never liked to have Lucy show so much temper about the guitar. But Edith laughed.

"If she wants Santa Claus to have Getty, she'd better carry it up to the sky-hole, and give it to him," said she.

It was a wrong thing to say, though Edith meant no harm. By and by, when mamma went out of the room in haste and left the guitar on the table, Lucy remembered what Edith had said. She looked around; Edith had followed mamma, and no one was left in the room but Lucy herself.

"Naughty ole fing!" said wee Lucy, glaring at the guitar on the table with all her might.

Then a sudden thought flew into her head and made it spin.

"'Better carry it up to the sky-hole,'" she repeated, "'give it to Sandy Claw.' Edy said so. I fink 'twould be good plan."

Ah, but baby as she was, she knew this was wrong.

"'Tis mamma's Getty," she reflected. "Little girls mustn't touch."

She ought to have run away as soon as that bad thought came, but she didn't, she waited and looked; and then she snatched up the guitar by its blue ribbon, and dragged it along the floor into the hall and up the broad staircase.

It went thump, thump, at every step, and tinkled crossly as the strings were touched. If the people in the parlor had not been so busy talking, they must have heard; but they did not hear, and Getty and the baby reached the attic in safety.

"Mamma won't sing to it any more," said Lucy in triumph.

But why did she feel so sorry — as if her heart was going to break?

"Shtop!" said she to the guitar, shaking it and setting it down hard, "don't you squeam!"

The skylight window was open; she had supposed it would be open. But where was Santa Claus?

Oh, he was up there; she heard him walking over her head. Now, this *is* a funny story, for there *was* a man up there walking on the roof! A man with big "whicksers" and a cap. It was not Santa Claus, of course; it was only a man named Mr. Jones, who happened to be there setting a pane of glass into the window.

Lucy climbed the ladder, dragging the whining, cross guitar after her. Mr. Jones peeped down to see who was there.

"Is that you, Sandy Claw?" said Baby in a flutter. "How you do?"

Mr. Jones was so surprised at being taken for Santa Claus that he had to put his hands to his sides and laugh. "Oh, I'm pretty well, but my name is Amos Jones. And who are you?"

"I's mamma's Baby-blue-eye," replied Lucy, admiring his frosty beard. No matter what he called himself, she knew he was Santa Claus, or how did he get up there on the "sky of the house"?

She gave a little sigh of delight, and moved her head this way and that trying to get a peep at the sledge and reindeer. All the while she kept striking the guitar against the sides of the ladder.

"What have you got there, little girl?" She made no answer except to scowl at the poor guitar, which shivered and gave a little trembling wail.

"But see here, baby, did your mother know you brought that thing up here?"

"H'm," said Lucy, swinging herself to and fro, "*we won't talk 'bout that!*"

"You don't want to talk about it, hey? Well, I shouldn't wonder," said the man, shaking with laughter again.

"Come, now," he went on in a coaxing tone, "won't you give *me* that fiddle?"

She had come on purpose to give him the guitar, but it was very strange he should ask for it. She hesitated and drew away. She did not like Santa Claus so well as she had expected.

"Where's your hossy?" she asked after a pause.

"My horse, did you say? Well, *I* never saw him; don't believe anybody else ever did. Wish you'd find him for me, little Bright Eyes."

Lucy was growing tired of this.

"Where's my Kissum present?"

"Your Christmas present, hey?"

Here Mr. Jones looked down smiling into the sweet, expectant blue eyes.

"Well, I haven't fetched any present for you, not yet."

"You goin' to bring it after supper?"

"If you'll give *this* to me, little Tot," said he, reaching down and seizing upon the guitar by its necklace of blue ribbon, — "if you'll give this to me, I'll promise you a Christmas present to-night, as sure as my name is Santa Claus!"

What a very, very queer man! It is not polite for people to snatch things *ever;* and, besides, the guitar belonged to mamma. But, alas, she could not help herself. Santa Claus took the guitar right out of her hands; he drew it up quickly; with tears she saw it go through the "sky-hole."

"Mamma's Getty! O me! O my! He'll

carry it 'way, 'way off! He'll take it up to the moon, I fink! Poor mamma, she'll feel *so* bad! Naughty, naughty man!"

A little while ago Lucy had had a bitter dislike for the guitar. Why wasn't she happy now to have it go up to the moon? But she was not happy nor glad; she was frightened. She crept tremblingly down-stairs, and threw herself on the sofa in the back parlor and cried.

## IV

### BROUGHT BACK FROM THE MOON

MRS. DUNLEE came into the back parlor a few minutes later.

"Where is my guitar?" said she.

Lucy did not answer for some moments.

"Lucy," repeated her mother, looking straight into the child's eyes, "what have you done with my guitar?"

Lucy hung her head.

"I tooked it 'way, 'way off, mamma; 'way up to the moon."

What could the child mean? She had strange fancies sometimes.

"The moon, Lucy? I don't understand you."

"Yes, mamma; Sandy Claw lives up in the

moon. He tooked it up there where he lives."

And this was all she would say. Nobody had the least idea what she was talking about; nobody thought once of Mr. Jones on the roof. He had only been there a few minutes, just long enough to put in a pane of glass.

John searched the stable, Molly searched the attic; Mr. Sanford dipped his arms up to the elbows in the little pond with a wall of stones around it in the front yard. But the guitar was not found.

"O mamma!" asked little Lucy in real distress, "does you feel *so* bad, mamma? Getty's gone 'way off, up to the moon!"

Wherever the guitar might have gone, Mrs. Dunlee began to fear she might never see it again.

Evening came. The Christmas-tree was bright and gay with wonderful presents. It bore on its branches every beautiful thing that

Kyzie, Edith, James, and Lucy had ever spoken of or thought of for a whole year.

"Old Santa Claus must have been listening at keyholes," said Mr. Sanford.

Lucy looked up with a frown. Perhaps she did not approve of people who listen at keyholes, and she had disliked Santa Claus ever since he sailed up through the sky with the guitar. Still, for all that, she liked the presents he had brought.

In the midst of the happy time, and just as Jimmy-boy and Lucy were playing on a horn and a drum, and "making a lovely noise," the door-bell rang, and a large package was left for "Mamma's little Baby-blue-eye."

So very large, what could it be? They all clustered around while papa cut the strings. And when the wrappings were off, out came that very guitar, safe home from its voyage to the moon!

Yes, that very guitar, blue ribbon and all!

And around Getty's neck, tied by the blue ribbon, were two pretty dolls, a lady and a gentleman, dressed almost alike, with a card, —

"FROM AMOS SANTA CLAUS JONES."

Then everybody understood Lucy's strange story, and knew what she must have done with the guitar; and everybody laughed and called her a "droll chick."

Nobody was more pleased than Lucy was to see the lost guitar. Since its journey to the moon she did not hate it any more, and somehow that naughty feeling never came again.

And the dolls! Lucy had many nicer ones already; but Aunt Vi thought these looked like husband and wife, just what Lucy had been wanting.

"My mallied dollies!" she exclaimed, and with Edith's help she named them on the

spot. The man was *Solly* Dolly Dunlee, the woman was *Polly* Dolly Dunlee.

"And *that's* what their names is," said Lucy. "Won't Betty Davis laugh when she sees 'em?"

This package from Santa Claus Jones was the last one opened. It made a good ending to a merry Christmas.

What a merry, merry Christmas it had been indeed!

"It reminds me of the old days, when Susy and Dotty Dimple and myself had our festivals in Portland, and were so happy that no words can tell our joy," said Mrs. Prudy Dunlee, smiling thoughtfully.

"Well, I know one thing," returned Edith, "the Parlin children couldn't have been any happier than the Dunlee children; *could* they, mother?"

Perhaps Edith was right; but would you have thought it possible that before long

these very Dunlee children were going to find fault with their Christmas presents?

Yet it is true that Jimmy-boy saw a toy engine the very next day which was larger and better than his own, and it made him unhappy. The toy engine belonged to Eddy Grant, and after this Jimmy did not find much fun in "getting up steam."

And then Edith, who had been delighted with her doll-house and its handsome furniture, was displeased because Fanny Luce had a doll-house with more pots and kettles in it, and a larger bedstead. Was it not strange?

Even little Lucy wished her new table-cloth had a red border like Betty Davis's.

Mrs. Dunlee looked troubled, and said to her husband, —

"The little ones are fretting already. They talk to one another, and think I do not hear them. Is it not a pity, when we have tried our best to make them happy?"

Mr. Dunlee replied, —

"My dear Prudy, you remember what we said to them just before Christmas?"

"Yes, I remember. But then I think of poor little Jimmy's toy engine, and it does seem hard to have to take it away."

"I know. Still, if taking it away would do the boy good?" said papa.

"Ah, *if* it would! But how can I be sure of that?" returned mamma, with a rather sad smile, for she did not like to punish her children.

Next morning Jimmy went about the house playing with Eddy Grant's toy engine, which he had borrowed.

"Splendid!" said he. "But where's *my* old engine, mean old thing? I can't find it."

"I have taken it," said his mother quietly. "You do not like it, and there's another boy who will."

Jimmy stood still in the middle of the floor, his eyes big with surprise.

"Why, *mother*, that's *my* engine!"

"No, my son, it was yours while you liked it. Do you forget what your father and I said before Christmas? Your presents were to be yours as long as you liked them, and then"—

"Oh, mamma, I did forget that!"

Jimmy cried a little, but made no complaint. This was a right and proper thing, and had been agreed upon beforehand, so there was nothing to be said.

"Would you like to go out with me for a walk?" asked his mother.

Jimmy said "Yes, mamma," wondering very much where she meant to go. She took him down near the bay, through a dirty street to a small dingy house, where some poor children lived. Here was a boy just his own age, but lame and on crutches.

"Oh, I know *him;* his name is Sandro," cried Jimmy; and, seizing the bag his mother carried, he began to pull at the string. The engine was in the bag; and, if his mother meant to give it to Sandro, he knew all at once that he was not only willing but glad.

Little Sandro Pico had a small face, pinched and almost wrinkled, but his black eyes grew very bright when he saw the beautiful new engine and was told that it belonged to him. Sandro's mother, Mrs. Pico, was pleased too, and smiled at Jimmy, showing her brilliant white teeth.

"Sandro liked that, didn't he?" said Jimmy, capering at Mrs. Dunlee's side as they went home.

"Yes, he was delighted with it. And, my son, if you should tire of another present, just let me know, for there are plenty of poor boys who have none at all."

"Oh, but I like my presents, mamma. I

like them ever so much," exclaimed Jimmy quickly.

"Do you? Then keep them and be happy."

As Mrs. Dunlee spoke, they were entering the front hall, and Edith stood near the door.

"She has been giving away Jimmy's things; will she give away my doll-house?" thought the little girl in alarm. "I've found fault with it and I'm afraid she knows it; I didn't mean she should hear."

Yes, mamma had heard. She knew that Edith could not cook a dinner for a large family on her "mizzerble stove;" and the man who made the stove "didn't know anything at all, or he would have made an oatmeal kettle and a poker, of course he would."

Mamma felt obliged to take away the doll-house, though there were tears in her eyes when she did it; she took it away and gave

it to Sadie Lawton, a poor little girl who had never had so nice a plaything before in all the days of her life.

"Dear little souls," said papa, when he saw Edith and Jimmy trying their best to be brave, "I fancy they'll take what Santa Claus brings next year and be thankful."

Lucy found fault with some of her presents, but they were not taken away from her; she would not have understood what it meant.

But I must go back to her now, and tell of something she did a few weeks later, which startled the family nearly as much as her giving the guitar to Amos Santa Claus Jones.

## V

### LUCY IN A BARREL

WHY is it that tiny folks of two and three and four years old should be so fond of stealing off and giving their friends such frights? I am sure I do not know. But Lucy's head was full of funny notions, and if you missed her for half an hour you felt pretty sure she had fallen into mischief.

One fine day Mrs. Dunlee walked down the gravel path with a visitor, talking to her all the way about the bird-of-paradise flowers she held in her hand, — gay flowers they were, with very long trailing tassels of red and yellow.

Lucy was in the back parlor undressing one of her new dolls and putting her in bed.

The doll's name was Biddy Fling, and she was in a high fever and needed a doctor.

Mrs. Dunlee was not gone from the room ten minutes, but it was time enough for Lucy to dart away like a humming-bird; and where did she go? What fancy had seized her now?

"I must d'ess up, and go a-calling," said she.

It was her idea of "d'essing up" to put on a breast-pin, that was always the first thing; and Molly O'Connor had a pin she greatly admired. It was a very large one, with a picture on it of a yellow house and green trees and red roses. She went softly into Molly's room, found the pin, and put it in the neck of her dress, managing to fasten it so that it would not fall off.

Then she ran to her mother's closet in great haste, climbed to the high shelf, and took down the bandbox which held mamma's best bonnet, a dark green velvet with a green curl-

ing feather, and nice satin strings. She put the bonnet on her little naughty head, and over the bonnet a long blue veil, and then she was ready to "go a-calling."

She thought she should go first to see Betty Davis, her dear friend Betty, whom she called her "play-maiden."

But before she could get away her mother was coming back to the house, and Lucy knew she would be saying, "Molly, have you seen the baby?" So she slipped out by the side-door and ran to the stable.

Now, there was a blue cart in the stable with an empty barrel in it; and hearing a step in the yard, Lucy thought she would climb into the barrel and hide. She went in head first, never once thinking of mamma's pretty bonnet. She could only think of one thing at a time, and now she was thinking she wanted to hide. She was afraid John would see her if she didn't. The veil was very large

"She was ready to go a-calling." Page 64.

indeed, and she drew it over her, covering her little self all up.

And there she was, that droll snip of a Lucy, at the very bottom of a barrel. Who would have thought of looking for her there? And very soon she was fast asleep.

Well, this is not all of it. The barrel had been put in the cart by John, who meant to drive the cart to Uncle Ben's. Mr. Ben Pauly lived on Lincoln Heights, and had a great many vegetables in his garden nearly all the year; and now he had some cabbages and cauliflower that he was willing John should take and carry away for Mr. Dunlee's hens. John said the hens ate so much that he could hardly find enough food for them, and he was glad of the vegetables.

He had been mending his hoe, and now it was time to go to Mr. Pauly's. He came out to the stable and harnessed the gray horse to the cart and drove away, and Lucy was having

a ride and knew nothing about it. She had not waked even when John threw an empty meal-bag right into the barrel where she lay. He threw it in without looking. He was not in the habit of peeping into a barrel to find little girls!

"Fol de rol," said he to himself, "fol de rol riddle! What a plague it is to keep hens!"

Pretty soon they came to a rough place in the road, and the cart jolted and rocked the barrel, and Lucy awoke and began to cry.

"What's that noise?" said John to himself. "Sounds like a little lamb strayed away. There 'tis again!"

"It's me, it's me," cried Lucy, rising to her feet, and trying as hard as she could to get out of the high barrel.

But John was rather deaf, and besides had begun to sing in a loud voice,

"Hold the fort, for we are coming!"

and did not hear a word she said.

"It's me, John, *me*, John," cried Lucy again.

"I think's likely that's a little calf a-bleating," said John, stopping his singing and looking right and left, but not behind him. "Fol de rol riddle! Whose calf has got lost, I wonder, right here in the street? I can't see anything that looks like a calf."

"It's me, John, it's *me-e-e!*" wailed the "d'essed up" little girl from the depths of the barrel. "Take me *ou-out*, John."

But it was of no use.

"Hold the fort, for we are coming!"

sang John, louder than ever.

The more she called and cried the higher rose his voice. And still he looked to the right and then to the left, but never once behind him.

It was not until they reached Uncle Ben Pauly's dooryard that the little one could make her words understood.

"Unky Ben! Unky Ben! Take Lucy," she sobbed.

And Uncle Ben went straight to the barrel and lifted her out.

"You don't say!" said John, staring with his mouth open wide. "Well, that beats *me!* Where did that child come from? *I* never put her into the cart!"

"If you didn't, who did?" said Uncle Ben, laughing. "She couldn't have got in herself, could she?"

Uncle Ben had Lucy in his arms; and leaving John still staring with surprise, he danced into the house with her, crying out, —

"See, children, I've found a rubber baby for you! A baby in a velvet bonnet."

"No, no, no!" shouted Lucy, "*not* a yubber baby!"

But the children laughed every time she spoke, saying, —

"Oh, what a nice one it is! It can talk!

May we have it to keep, papa? Oh, thank you so much!"

It was perfectly dreadful for Lucy. She had had a very hard time all the way; and now to be talked about like this, and not feel quite sure whether they were in earnest or not! All the cousins — Fanny and Ada and Charley and Phil — crowded around her exclaiming, —

"Oh, what a beautiful, beautiful doll! I never saw such a big one! Look at its breast-pin! Look at its bonnet! Has it got any teeth?"

And they all pretended not to believe her when she stamped her foot and screamed, —

"I's Lu-u-u-cy!"

"Why will you tease her?" said a big fat woman, Mrs. Chick, who was visiting at Uncle Ben's. She had once been Lucy's nurse. "I know her — it *is* Lucy! I was at her house when she was born; but she didn't wear a bonnet then!"

Good Mrs. Chick took the child in her arms, and the cousins said, —

"Oh, maybe it *is* Lucy, after all!"

Still you can never know how sad it was. Lucy thought surely her little heart would break. But she lived through it, and rode home in the cart on a stool. Such a droll little object! John had to keep singing "Hold the Fort," to keep from laughing; she couldn't bear to be laughed at any more.

"They fought I was a yubber baby," said she next day to Betty Davis, "*My* Mrs. Chick telled 'em I wasn't; but they said I was, and I was! Oh, 'twas awful!"

After this, whenever she had a wild wish to "d'ess up and go a-calling," she remembered that ride in the barrel, and how very, very sad it had seemed.

I wish I could say it put an end to her naughtiness, that she became as good as Betty Davis, and never ran away any more.

But this I will say, she did not run away for a long time.

And a few weeks after her ride in the barrel she did something that made everybody very glad and thankful. She did not mean it at all, or even know what she was doing. It was only "one of Lucy's happy accidents," so Mr. Sanford called it.

Would you like to hear about it?

## VI

### SAVED BY A GOOSE

Lucy was as gay and thoughtless that morning as a little robin that sings in a tree. The sun was bright, the sky was clear, — you know it was a lovely country where the Dunlees lived, — and Aunt Vi came downstairs with her writing-pad in her hand, thinking she would go across the street, a little farther up the hill, and sit under the pepper-trees to write.

"May I go with you?" asked a sweet young voice.

"Ah, is that you, wee Lucy?" said Aunt Vi kindly, though she was not very well pleased. She did not want Lucy's small company, that was certain.

But then she remembered that Lucy was almost alone. Mr. and Mrs. Dunlee had gone to their lemon-ranch, the place where their little lemon-trees were growing; Jimmy was at Uncle Ben's playing with Charley; and Kyzie and Edith were nearly ready to start for school. What would Lucy do to amuse herself?

"Baby-blue-eye, why don't you go out in the kitchen and stay with Molly?" said sister Kyzie.

Lucy shook her little head.

"Molly is baking," returned Aunt Vi, sighing a little. "I suppose I really ought to take Lucy with me. Yes, come, if you like, darling." And she smiled down at the baby's sweet, pleading face.

Kyzie waited a moment to tie on Lucy's white bonnet, and to say, "Now be a good girl, dear;" and then she hurried off to school with Edith.

"Catch me, catch me, you *can't* catch me," cried little Lucy to her aunt, darting up the hill ahead of Miss Dunlee, her golden hair blowing wild in the wind.

"How bright and gay you look, dear. But don't run away from me," said Aunt Vi, panting for breath.

By that time Lucy had stopped to pick some tiny flowers by the roadside. "Mamma says they are God's flowers; but God has got so many flowers I know he won't care if I pick *some*."

Aunt Vi was in haste, but tried to be patient. When they reached the top of the hill Lucy gazed about and asked, "May I sit 'way up, on that rock?"

There had once been a house on the hill, but it was now gone, all but the large, gray stones on which it had stood. These made quite a high wall. Aunt Vi lifted the wee lady in her arms and placed her on this wall,

which was really so high, that, as Lucy sat on it, she had to stoop a wee bit to kiss her tall auntie.

"Oh, pretty, pretty," she cried, drawing a breath of delight. "I can see all the folks in the wo-orld and all the folks' houses! I can see *my* house, Auntie Vi; I can see Betty Davis's house."

"So you can, dear. We are away up, ever so far, aren't we? And now you can sit here a while, and think what Molly is doing in your house, — making quince turnovers, perhaps, — and what Betty is doing in *her* house."

"I fink Betty Davis is eating an ollinge, yes, I do. She eats ollinges most half the time."

"Does she? Well, when you are tired of thinking of her and of Molly, you may eat these sweet crackers. But I cannot talk to you, Lucy, for I am going to write."

"Well, then, write about *me!* Please to, auntie. Tell 'em my name's Lucy; no, tell 'em Baby-blue-eye. Tell 'em my papa 'n' mamma's gone a-yidin', and Kyzie's gone to" —

"Little Lucy," said Aunt Vi, "I am in a great hurry about my story; and you are such a dear, good, happy little girl that I know you will be willing to let me go and sit under that big tree and write it. And you won't talk, will you?"

"No, *I* won't talk. Kiss me 'fore you go. Oh, what queer little tucks you've got in your eyes!" said the baby, smoothing out the wrinkles in her aunt's eyelids, "queer little tucks! *Good*-by."

"Good-by, darling," returned Miss Dunlee, hurrying away to a large tree with her writing-pad and paper and pencil.

But little Lucy kept on chattering to herself all the while. Her voice had a cooing,

pleasant sound, like the twitter of a bird on a bough, and her aunt was not disturbed by it till the bird began to ask questions.

"When will I be ninety, auntie?"

"Oh! not for a long time."

"Am I 'most fifty now, auntie?"

"No, you are only three. But please be quiet, dear."

Lucy obeyed for nearly a minute, and then called out again in her clear little voice,

"Will to-morrow be Sunday?"

"No."

"Oh, it won't be Sunday again till Thursday! *will* it?"

The darling little torment! Dearly as Miss Dunlee loved her, she did wish somebody else had the care of her that morning. Why need Jimmy-boy have gone to Uncle Ben's, and left her without a playmate?

Miss Dunlee rose, and went to the wall where Lucy sat.

"Let me take you down, my child. Don't you want to go home?"

"Oh, no; oh, no!" said Lucy, clinging to the rock with both hands, and spilling half her sweet crackers.

"Then I must go to another tree farther away; you talk too much. But I will not go very far — call me loud if you want to get down."

"Oh, I'll ying a bell," laughed Lucy. "I'll ying a bell when I want to get down."

Her auntie laughed too, just for thinking what a little goose Lucy was. She laughed, and turned away, leaving the child still talking.

"What a chatterbox! She would talk to the very flies and mosquitoes," thought Miss Dunlee.

Before she reached the tree where she meant to sit, she heard Lucy say in a wondering tone, —

"Funny fire! Funny fire!"

Aunt Vi did not turn her head. She kept on toward the big tree. She thought she had already wasted too much precious time listening to the baby's prattle. But Lucy called louder, —

"Little *red* fire! Auntie, aun-*tee!* See that funny fire! What made 'em make a fire top o' our house?"

Aunt Vi turned then, you may be sure. She turned, and looked down the hill toward the Dunlee house.

Indeed, and indeed, there *was* a fire "top of it," a red flame shooting up from the roof!

How it came there she could not think; but there it was — a bright red fire growing larger every moment. Oh, the horror of it! The house burning, and poor Molly O'Connor all alone in it, not knowing there was a fire blazing right over her head!

The Dunlee house was quite high up; people were not likely to see the flames. Aunt Vi tore down the hill, shouting, "Fire, FIRE, FIRE!"

She met a man, she met a boy; it was not two minutes — it seemed two hours — before the bells were ringing and the fire-engine clanging through the streets.

She entered the yard just ahead of the engine. Molly met her at the front door with an anxious face. "Is anybody's house afire?" she cried.

"*Anybody's* house!"

Molly understood it all in a moment. The engine hurried up the gravel path, and the water from the hose began to play upon the roof like a heavy rain-storm.

"We came just in time," said one of the men.

It was true. That dreadful red flame, which had been growing and growing, was

beaten down and drowned out before it had done any serious harm; and, thank Heaven! Mr. Dunlee's house was saved.

Yes, and it was little Lucy who had saved it; it was that restless, bright-eyed, chattering baby. Not another soul in town had seen the fire till Lucy spied it, bless her little heart!

"It was a goose that saved Rome, you know," said Aunt Vi, laughing; though the tears ran down her cheeks all the while.

When Mr. and Mrs. Dunlee returned from their drive, they were greatly astonished to see what had happened.

"If it had not been for this baby, you might not have had any home to come to," said Aunt Vi. "Yet I was feeling rather cross this morning because I had to take her with me. I did not write much on my story; but of what use are a thousand stories when one's house is on fire?"

Lucy did not seem to understand a word

of this. Some men had made a fire on the "sky of the house," and some more men had come and put out the fire; this was what she thought.

It was rather "funny," to be sure, but then the whole world is funny to a child of Lucy's age.

"God is very good," said Kyzie to herself; "it makes me love Him when I think how good He is."

They were all so happy that they laughed at every little thing. Molly was set to making ice-cream; Betty Davis was invited to dinner; and when Lucy gave some ice-cream to the cat in a nice china bowl her mother forgot to reprove her. The bowl was broken. Was that anything to laugh at? But they all laughed.

You see, they were all thinking about their dear home, and how glad they were that it had been saved.

Little Lucy did not know why mamma held her so close that night, and kissed her so many, many times, declaring she was "no goose after all."

She did not know why Aunt Vi bought a silver mug lined with gold next time she went shopping, and gave it to her with her name on it, "Lucy Dunlee."

"That is a bright, particular mug," said papa; "you don't know now what it means, little girl; but you'll know one of these days."

"Will I know when I'm ninety?" cried Lucy, joyfully flourishing the mug in the air. "Papa, there's some men went up the sky-hole just now; I saw 'em. Is they goin' to make some more fire top o' the house?"

## VII

### LUCY'S DOCTOR DEE

BEFORE her father had time to answer her question, Lucy had run back to the kitchen. Betty Davis was there, and the little girls were doing a small baking. Molly had given them some pieces of dough, and each of them had a little moulding-board of her own and a rolling-pin. Molly had buttered some tiny plates for their tiny pies.

"One of ye may have strawb'ry jam, and the other of ye may have squints jelly," said Molly, with a broad smile.

While the little girls were trying to decide which one preferred jelly for her pie, and which preferred jam, they still heard

the tramp, tramp, of men's feet on the roof of the house.

Lucy paused, and let her dimpled hand rest on her rolling-pin.

"I must go up-stairs," said she; "I must go up-stairs. There's some men a-doing *sumfin'* in my sky-hole."

"So they is," replied Betty, listening and looking rather frightened.

"Come along with me, children, I'm going up there myself; I won't let anything hurt you," said Edith.

At the top of the attic stairs they overtook Kyzie.

"Why, what are you all coming up here for?" she asked in surprise.

"I suppose we came, same as you did, to see what is going on, answered Edith, tossing her head.

But though they peeped with all their eight eyes through the skylight, nothing could be seen but a piece of blue sky.

"Do you suppose father knows there's somebody up there?" wondered Edith.

"To be sure he does," answered Kyzie.

"Well, if folks wants mamma's Getty, I sha'n't give it to 'em any more," declared Lucy firmly.

"They haven't come for that guitar, dear child; they've only come to mend the roof," explained Kyzie. "You know, Edith, our kitchen chimney burned out the other day, and the roof took fire from some sparks."

"Oh, yes; wasn't it dreadful?"

Edith shuddered and drew in her breath.

"Well, I know what those men are doing," continued Kyzie; "one of them is tearing off the burnt shingles from the roof and nailing on new ones; the other man has some mortar, and he is filling up the holes in the chimney. You see, the fire made holes between the bricks."

"So it did; I understand it all now,"

returned Edith, rather ashamed that she had not understood it before. She liked to know things for herself without being told. "But aren't you glad Lucy saw that fire with her bright eyes?"

"Yes, I am, or we shouldn't have any house to-day," said Kyzie.

And then she and Edith both threw their arms about their dear little Baby-blue-eye and kissed her. Lucy thought they kissed her because her eyes were so bright.

The four children staid in the attic a long while, and the wind blew on them sharply through the "sky-hole." Edith said that it blew straight into Lucy's mouth, which was open all the time, and down into her throat. At any rate, Lucy's throat was sore for some days after this, and she had a cough.

Mrs. Dunlee felt troubled. Not because the child seemed very ill, for she did not,

though she really suffered somewhat. But she was so extremely cross. Lucy was often cross when she did not feel well. It was a habit, and grew upon her; and this was what troubled her mother.

Lucy fretted because she had to stay in the house for a day or two.

"I don't want to, mamma, it's drefful! I *can't* stay in the house!"

"Betty Davis will come and see you. I'll send for her," said Mrs. Dunlee.

Betty and Lucy had been friends all their short lives; and the sweetest little friendship it was too. Lucy loved her little "play-maiden," and Betty loved Lucy; and they hardly ever had a falling-out, but played together like two turtle-doves.

"When Betty comes you must be kind to her," said Kyzie. "You know, Betty is always kind; she is a dear little girl."

"She isn't any kinder nor any dearer 'n

*me!*" wailed Lucy. "*I* don't want her coming here."

Betty came, feeling very sorry for Lucy. You could see that by the look of pity in her brown eyes. She brought her doll's bedstead, a new brass one as bright as gold.

But before long Lucy tired of it, and called Betty a "naughty ole fing," because she happened to put the dolls to bed in the wrong end of the bedstead. Betty went home in tears.

"Your dear little play-maiden! How could you treat her so?" said Kyzie. "Don't you know she is going away off to Santa Barbara by and by?"

"Hope she will," retorted Lucy. "Puts my chillun's feets on the pillows! *My* chilluns can't sleep topside down!"

It was very tedious bearing with all this ill-humor. One minute Lucy wanted to hear the guitar, next minute the piano. She

begged Kyzie to make up stories out of the picture-books, but never said "Thank you;" and if a story failed to please her, snatched away the book and began to cry.

Kyzie and Jimmy borrowed Captain Goodwin's monkey Jocko. Lucy liked to see him jump upon the bureau, spread out his small crooked fingers, and catch a fly before the fly could wink. Jocko was a solemn creature and never smiled, and that made you laugh all the more.

But when he began to pull Lucy's hair, of course he had to go; and then Lucy scolded Kyzie.

"Did you fink I wanted to see that bad monkey? *I* didn't want to see him."

It is a sad habit for little children to fall into, this habit of crossness. Is there any need of it?

Next day it rained. It was now the rainy season. Lucy was more dismal than ever.

"What makes it rain *every* time?" she asked, with a scowl, though it had not rained before for a long, long time.

Mrs. Dunlee sighed, and looked out of the window.

"Two friends of yours are coming under an umbrella, Lucy."

"Oh, who is it, who is it, mamma?"

It was a blind lady, Mrs. Pope, whom Lucy dearly loved; and with her her maid, Bridget Fling. They had walked through the rain to bring Lucy some bright Christmas-roses and scarlet pinks from the park.

The little girl thanked Mrs. Pope very pleasantly, and felt happy for five minutes. "Dear Aunt Sally," said she, and stroked the blind lady's cheeks. She did not mean to be cross to *her*, oh, no; Aunt Sally was so good, she had knit Lucy so many silk stockings.

But she forgot by and by and cried.

"Poor child," said gentle Mrs. Pope, whom Lucy called Aunt Sally. "Poor child, what can we do to make her happy?"

She spoke in a low tone, but Lucy heard.

"*I* dess you'll have to send for my Doctor Dee. My Doctor Dee always knows what's the matter 'iv me."

She meant Dr. Devoll, a great friend of hers.

When Biddy Fling was putting on blind Mrs. Pope's overshoes in the hall, Mrs. Pope said, —

"I never saw Lucy before when she was not pleasant. She may be sicker than you think, Mrs. Dunlee; I do hope you'll send for the doctor."

"I think I will, Mrs. Pope. He knows what to say to children when they are nervous and unreasonable."

So Mr. Dunlee went to Dr. Devoll next morning, and asked him to come and make his little girl behave better.

"I'll be there soon. I think I know how to cure cross children," replied Dr. Devoll, and he laughed and shook his forefinger.

He went to Mr. Dunlee's in his carriage which was spattered with mud, and got out in a hurry, while his colored driver, Sambo, sat and held the reins.

Lucy loved the doctor, and the moment she heard his step in the hall she began to laugh and clap her hands. He ran up-stairs quickly and softly, and stood at the door of her chamber, but would not go in till the little queen bade him enter.

Then he walked up to her chair — for you know she was not sick enough to be in bed — and said, —

"Oh, ho, little girl, what are you here for?"

"I'se defful sick, Docker Dee! Want to hear me cough?"

Then she coughed so hard that she almost choked.

"Well done, *very* well done," said the doctor, and looked at her tongue.

"My doll's defful sick too. Here's my Fibby. What's the matter 'iv her?"

"Black measles, ma'am."

Then he nodded to Mrs. Dunlee to go out of the room. He wanted to see Lucy alone. Mamma went out smiling. She knew he was going to say something that would do the child good.

"Well, little girl," said he, looking at her sharply, "what did you do yesterday when mamma washed your face?"

Lucy dropped her eyes.

"I *squeamed.*"

"Oh, ho! And what did you do this morning when she combed your hair?'

"I — I — *squeamed,*" replied Lucy, turning away her blushing face.

"In-deed! And what did mamma do when you screamed? Did she run away?"

"*No!* Mammas don't *ever* yun away!"

"Don't they? Well, I should think they would. I'd run away. What makes your mamma stay here with such a naughty girl?"

"'Cause — 'cause she — she loves me!"

"Does she? How queer! Then, if she loves you, why don't you love *her?*"

"Oh, I do, I do. I love her *dilly!*"

"Fie! Don't tell me that! If you love her with all your heart, what makes you act so?"

Lucy twisted about in her chair. She did not know what excuse to make for herself.

"I fink," said she, peeping shyly at the doctor, "I fink — well, when a squeam comes up in my mouf — folks *has* to squeam when it comes up in their mouf!"

"Fiddle-de-dee!"

"Mebbe I wouldn't have to," she added thoughtfully, — "*mebbe* I wouldn't if my mouf was full of candy!"

The doctor drew a long face.

"Candy won't help you, little girl. What you need is bitter medicine. I've brought some for you."

Lucy frowned.

"I don't like bitter messon, Doctor Dee!"

"Don't you? How strange! But you won't have to take this unless you scream."

"Oh!" Lucy's face grew smooth again.

"No; I'll tell your mother so. Here are some nice little white pills in a vial; they are not bitter, they are sweet. Mamma will give you some every little while."

"Oh, I like sweet pills!"

"But this bitter medicine is for *squeams*. You needn't take it if you are pleasant. See, I put it here on the table; and if there's any of it gone to-morrow when I call, I shall know you've been a naughty girl. Good-by."

When Mrs. Dunlee came back to the

chamber, Lucy was looking bright and pleasant, and held up her lips for a kiss.

"O mamma, I love Dr. Dee! I won't have to take bitter messon, mamma!"

"I hope not, Lucy."

"I'se so sorry I was naughty to you, mamma. Did you feel *so* bad when I was naughty?"

"Yes, Lucy, it grieved me.'"

"I fink I didn't love you *with my heart*, mamma, not when I was naughty; Docker Dee says I didn't. But, oh, I love you now, I do."

"How do you know you love me?"

"'Cause I'se going to *try be good*."

"That's the only way little girls can ever know they love their mothers," said Mrs. Dunlee, looking very happy. She had not looked so happy for three whole days. "If they try to be good, *of course* they love their mothers."

When Dr. Dee called next morning Lucy said gleefully, —

"I didn't take that bitter messon. See, I didn't take a drop."

"Oh, ho! that's right; that's worth hearing. Now you can go out-doors to-morrow and make mud-pies."

And she did. Her "sky-rosy" had six new white roses and six new pink buds. There were some new chickens peeping in the back-yard, waiting for Lucy to feed them. And overhead the sun looked down on her with a smile, as if he was glad to see his little girl once more.

"How you do, Betty Davis?" said Lucy, as her little play-maiden came up the path. "I was sorry I called you naughty ole fing."

"I was sorry too," said Betty.

## VIII

### GOING TO AUNT SALLY'S

"Mamma picks her from her nest,
In a snowy night-robe drest,
Plucks the cherries from each cheek,
Red-ripe such as robins seek."

So sang Mrs. Dunlee one morning not long after this, as she went into Lucy's chamber and found her little girl just waking from a long and refreshing sleep.

Lucy looked up with a thoughtful smile. "You love me when I'm good and when I'm naughty, *don't* you, mamma?"

For she remembered how cross she had been lately, and how kindly her mother had borne with her. Dr. Dee would want to run away if *his* little girl was naughty; he had

said so. But mamma did not want to run away; she loved Lucy when she was good and when she was naughty too.

Mrs. Dunlee took the child in her arms after she was bathed and dressed, and had had her breakfast, and said, —

"I am glad you know I love you, Baby-blue-eye. I love you always, and God loves you always."

"Then I'll try not to squeam any more," replied Lucy, laying her little golden head against her mother's breast. "I'll be just as good! — Oh, see Jimmy!"

Half a dozen little boys, mounted on small donkeys called burros, were riding with all their might up the street. Jimmy was on his own white burro, waving his hand to Lucy and his mother, who sat near the bay-window.

"It is a very pretty sight, and the burros seem to enjoy the sport as well as the boys,"

said Mrs. Dunlee. "But now I must go up to inquire for Aunt Vi."

She set Lucy gently down from her lap, and started to go up-stairs with an orange in her hand. Lucy followed her. Aunt Vi was in her "blue tower," sitting before a bright fire. She was not writing or even reading, though she held a book in her hand.

"How do you do, dear?" asked Mrs. Dunlee, going up to her and kissing her forehead.

"My throat is a little better; but I don't care for the orange, thank you," replied Aunt Vi. She smiled as she spoke.

"I'm glad auntie is not cross when she is sick," said Mrs. Dunlee to Lucy, who looked down at the carpet, and wondered if big ladies ever did feel cross like little girls?

Presently Aunt Vi drank some water from a glass which stood near her on a little table,

and made a wry face because it hurt her to swallow.

"She doesn't *look* pyeasant," thought Lucy. After a little while she held the glass to auntie's lips herself, her eyes dancing with fun to see the poor lady swallow with another wry face.

"Oh, she thinks I'm cross, the little rogue," said the sick lady, much amused. "Don't offer me any more water, Lucy, and I'll not make up faces for you to laugh at."

"Elvira, dear, would you like to have me read to you?" said mamma to auntie.

Miss Elvira replied that she should like it very much. And then they both looked at Lucy, who was dancing about like a great giddy butterfly. Nobody could read or hear reading with that child in the room.

Mrs. Dunlee remembered that a ride had been promised her.

"I think you may go visiting, Lucy.

Would you like to have John take you to Captain Goodwin's to see the monkey and the parrot? Or to Uncle Ben's to see your cousins?"

Lucy reflected a minute.

"I'd ravver go see Aunt Sally. She bringed me a Kismus rose when I was sick."

"Very well, you may go to Aunt Sally Pope's."

Mrs. Pope lived on Lincoln Heights, in a white house; but she would not have known the color of it if people had not told her, for you remember the poor woman was blind.

She was just as happy, though, as if she could see. She had a maid, Bridget Fling, who was very deaf; but Bridget was happy too, for she did not know how little she could hear.

"There is this difference between Bridget

and myself," said Mrs. Pope sometimes. "I know I am blind, but she does not know she is deaf."

This was strange. Mrs. Pope had to ring a large, loud-sounding bell to call Biddy; yet sometimes Biddy did not hear it. It does not seem possible, but once, when it thundered, I am told that Biddy ran into the parlor and asked, —

"Ma'am, did you speak?"

Mrs. Pope pitied Bridget, and would not for the world have let her know how deaf she was. And Bridget pitied Mrs. Pope and loved her; and they lived together as happy as two bees in a rose.

"How do you do, ma'am? I've brought your little girl to see you, with a nice blue dress on," said John, walking right into Mrs. Pope's parlor without ringing or knocking.

The lovely old lady looked up with a smile as Lucy stroked her cheek, and said, —

"Oh, I feegot to bless Aunt Sally!" Page 105.

"Good-morning, Aunt Sally."

Mrs. Pope was "Aunt Sally" to all the good children in town; but perhaps the one she held closest and kissed oftenest was wee Lucy, her dear minister's daughter. Mrs. Pope knit fine worsted stockings for ever so many children, but for Lucy she would knit nothing poorer than silk. So you may be sure that Lucy loved Aunt Sally. She had put her name in her childish prayer of her own accord. Mrs. Dunlee told Mrs. Pope that sometimes after little Lucy's head was on the pillow she would exclaim, —

"Oh, I fee-got to bless Aunt Sally!" Then she would spring out of bed, kneel down again and say, —

"Please bless Aunt Sally — knits my stockings — can't see."

Mrs. Pope smiled to hear this, and said, "God has always blessed me, Mrs. Dunlee,

and surely he always will, when a loving little child is asking him."

Aunt Sally was glad to-day to see Lucy — I mean, to hear her merry voice.

"Run all about the house wherever you choose, my little singing-bird," said she.

"I'm going now, ma'am," spoke up John, "but I'll be back for the child at noon."

Biddy was glad to have Lucy in the kitchen, till she saw that the little creature was uncommonly full of mischief, and likely to make her a deal of trouble.

"What will I do for a pudding, mum?" said she, going into the parlor to Mrs. Pope. "I'd mixed one already to bake, and the baby has thrown it into the ash-barrel."

Little try-patience! She set the water running while Biddy was gone; and Mrs. Pope had to go out to the kitchen and stop it, for Biddy did not hear.

And soon Biddy was saying, —

"Naughty baby, to pull the needles out of Aunt Sally's knitting-work, when poor Aunt Sally can't see."

Biddy picked up the stitches. Then she brought out five colored picture-books, and spread them on the parlor floor. This kept wee Lucy still for a few minutes.

"I know every letter there is in this world," she declared; and she began to read some surprising stories aloud to Aunt Sally in a little, high, squealing tone.

"Once — there — was a little boy, and the wind blowed him; and bimeby it blowed his hair right off!"

Aunt Sally said, "How strange!" and Lucy went on to another story.

"Once — there — was a wee, wee girlie. And she had thous-ands dollies. Couldn't hear; couldn't see. Cow came, ate 'em all up!"

"Is it possible?" said Aunt Sally.

"There, now," said Lucy, "dess I'll go out see Biddy."

She shut the door behind her so softly that Mrs. Pope suspected mischief, and went out to the kitchen to say, —

"Bridget, you'd better give the child some soapsuds, and let her blow bubbles, for then we shall know what she is doing."

"Yes, mum," replied Bridget, "that's a good idea, mum," though she had not understood exactly what her mistress said.

Mrs. Pope went back to the parlor, expecting soon to hear Lucy screaming with delight over the bubbles. But Biddy made such a clatter, beating eggs for a fresh pudding, and slamming the oven door, that Lucy's voice seemed to be quite drowned.

"Biddy is a very noisy woman, but she doesn't know it," thought Mrs. Pope, with a good-natured smile.

A half-hour passed, and not a sound from

Lucy. Mrs. Pope grew uneasy, and rang the bell for Biddy.

"Where is that child?" she asked.

"Why, I thought she was with you, mum," replied Bridget, looking around in surprise.

The picture-books were still scattered about the floor, but no Lucy was to be seen.

"With *me?* You thought she was with *me?*" cried Mrs. Pope. "Why, I thought she was in the kitchen blowing bubbles."

"Marbles? Yes, mum, I gave her the marbles, mum, what there were in the box; but she was off next minute, said she was going to Aunt Sally."

It seemed not a word about bubbles had reached Biddy's ears; she thought it was *marbles.* She had been busy every minute, and had dropped the child off her mind.

Dinner was ready now, but Mrs. Pope could not think of dining till Lucy was found.

"She must be up-stairs, Bridget."

Bridget thought not.

"Don't you remember I was in your chamber, mum, not half an hour ago, to get you a ball of silk out of your ivory box? And wouldn't I have seen her then, if she had been there?"

Mrs. Pope began to look troubled.

"Never mind, Bridget, you go again, and I'll go with you."

"Mrs. Pope took Biddy's arm, and they went from room to room up-stairs, calling, "Lucy! Lucy!" but no answer came. Then they searched the attic in every corner, even looking in the trunks and chests; and they hunted the cellar; but no Lucy was to be found.

"How strange!" said Mrs. Pope, as she had said of Lucy's story about the boy whose hair was blown off by the wind. "How very strange!"

For the child could not have left the

house. Every door was kept locked and bolted. She could not possibly have left the house unless somebody from outside had picked a lock and come in and stolen her. *That* wasn't likely. Somebody *might* have done it while deaf Biddy was down cellar getting potatoes; but Mrs. Pope knew this was not so. Lucy was a precious little girl, but nobody would think of stealing her!

"She must be in the house," said both the women. "But where, where?"

They searched cellar, chamber, attic, again and then again, till they were ready to drop from fatigue; and then Mrs. Pope sent Biddy to Mrs. Pauly, Mr. Dunlee's sister, who lived not far away, to ask her what ought to be done. Mrs. Pauly was a very kind neighbor and friend, and she was also Lucy's Aunt Jessie.

Her husband, "Uncle Ben," was out of town. Mrs. Pauly came into Mrs. Pope's

house quite out of breath and sadly frightened; but she brought with her a policeman to help them out of their trouble.

The policeman insisted on searching the house again. This would make the sixth time; but Mrs. Pope and Bridget said not a word, they merely followed him, and Mrs. Pauly followed too.

"I suppose you've looked in all the closets?" said he.

"In every one but mine," answered Mrs. Pope. "I keep all my valuable papers in that closet, and it is never left unlocked for a moment, so you see she can't have got in there; but here is the key, if you like."

And she took it out of her pocket.

## IX

### THE ROBBER BABY

THE policeman took the key, and opened the closet door.

And there, if you'll believe it, was that missing baby curled upon a shelf sound asleep!

But how did she get into a closet that was locked?

She must have slipped in very slily when Bridget went after the ball of silk. Bridget had not seen her, and had locked the door upon Lucy without knowing she was there.

The child was very much bewildered when the policeman brought her out, and still more bewildered when she was seized and kissed and cried over by Aunt Sally, Aunt Jessie, and Bridget.

"I speaked to Bridget forty hund'erd times," said she; "but she didn't come let me out, and *didn't* come let me out."

At this moment John arrived to take Lucy home. Kyzie was with him in the carriage, and did not know what to think when she saw a policeman going away leaving so many people laughing and crying.

"O Lucy, Lucy," said she, after hearing the story, "what a child you are for adventures!"

Lucy did not know what "adventures" meant, but fancied they were not nice things, and was sure *she* never had them!

"I don't fink so," said she with dignity. "*I* didn't do nuffin!"

"She only went to sleep on a closet shelf," laughed Aunt Jessie.

"That was what *she* did!" added Fanny and Ada and Charley and Phil, who were all there, and *such* teases! "She's a rubber baby, don't you know?"

Kyzie tossed Lucy into the carriage, where she could hide her head behind John. She knew Lucy did not like to be called a rubber baby.

"I am sorry she was such a trouble, Mrs. Pope," said Kyzie with a grown-up air. "You see, she is never willing to take a nap in her crib in the daytime like other children. Betty Davis takes naps; I wish Lucy would. Mother says Lucy *steals* her naps. She's always going to sleep in all sorts of queer places."

"'Twas my fault," said Biddy. "She says she called to me, but I didn't hear her. I suppose it was because my mind was on the pudding; and it got scorched after all."

When Lucy got home and sat in her own high chair at dinner, her father and mother talked over the affair, and asked her various questions. Lucy replied with great unconcern,

"Well, there's a chair in Aunt Sally's closet, and I crep' up on the chair. I couldn't get on the shelf *'thout* a chair! And then Biddy made two puddings. I wish I had some those puddings."

It might have been thought that Lucy's "adventures" were over for the day, but she was ready for another one that very afternoon.

Do you remember lame Sandro, the little boy to whom Jimmy had given his toy engine at Christmas? Mr. Pico, Sandro's father happened to be mowing grass on Mrs. Porter's lawn just across the street from Mr. Dunlee's. Miguel Pico was his name; people generally called him Mick.

Mick liked to work for Mrs. Porter, who had a pleasant word for him always; and then her grounds were so fine. The house was of stone of several colors, and set so high up that it was fun for Mick while he trundled

his lawn-mower to look down and see the whole city lying under his feet.

"The people up here have good times," thought Mick, "the Porters and Dunlees and all that live on the hill."

Mick was a Spaniard, and I suppose he thought in Spanish, but I have to put his words into English.

Mrs. Porter was just setting forth with her ponies. They wore silver harnesses, and her carriage was very fine. Across the way Mick could see Mr. and Mrs. Dunlee driving out in a light-colored wagon called a "surrey," — they were going to see a sick woman. Wee Lucy stood in the front doorway, looking after them and shaking a doll's tablecloth.

"The folks up here don't have to work like me; they have good times without working," thought Mick; and he scowled hard at a handsome baby-carriage which stood

beside the gravel-path close to the iron fence.

"It tries my patience to see that little go-cart. Mrs. Porter's grandchildren don't need it; they're well and can walk, but my Sandro is sick and lame. *He* ought to have something like that to wheel him round in. Whew! Wouldn't he laugh, though, the little fellow, if he could get a ride in it!"

Mick's face was growing very dismal, and he was so lost in thought as to be quite startled when a little voice chirped very near him, —

"What you matter, Man?"

Mick looked down and saw a mite of a child, maybe three years old, gazing wonderingly up in his face. He smiled very pleasantly. He knew it must be Mr. Dunlee's child; and he liked the Dunlees, who were always doing kind things for the poor.

"Good-afternoon to you, little Miss. Can you tell me your name?"

"My name's Mamma's Bless-her-heart, Wee Lucy, Baby-blue-eye," said she, rattling something that lay in her dainty white apron, and looking up at him again.

"What you doing, Man?"

"Cutting grass, little Miss."

Lucy shook her head.

"No, you isn't. You haven't any sidders."

"Scissors? Oh, here's my scissors, great *big* scissors," laughed Mick, trundling the machine which sent countless bits of grass flying. "Here, out of the way, little girl. Mustn't get so close to my scissors. I don't want to cut *you*."

"Poor man, 'thout any coat on," pursued Lucy, in a tone of deep pity. "You was a good man to cut folks' grass, — 'most as good as Sandy Claw. I's goin' to give you all my mamma's money."

Here she plucked Mick by the sleeve, and catching one of his brown hands, tried

to pour into it the contents of her little apron.

"You may have it, Man," cooed she, flirting broadcast a shower of silver and gold. "You may have it all."

"Stop, baby, stop! What are you doing?" cried Mick in surprise, stooping to pick up the scattered treasure. "Hold out your apron."

"Lucy, Miss Lucy," called Molly O'Connor, from over the way. And Lucy began to run.

"Take the money; here, take it home," said Mick.

"No," returned the little one, with a wilful shake of her elbows, "I bringed it to *you*, Man."

And off she flew, leaving Mick staring after her, not quite knowing what he ought to do. Should he call out to the child's nurse? No; for by that time she had taken

Lucy by the hand and led her into the house. He would wait till Mr. Dunlee and his wife returned from their ride.

He picked up the last bit of silver that lay shining in the shorn grass.

"Let's see, two, four, six — why, here's thirteen dollars and seventy-five cents! 'Twould buy a little go-cart for my Sandro, I do believe!"

This was Mick's first thought, and not a strange one, for he had just been thinking of little "go-carts," as he called them. Not that he dreamed of keeping the money, — he was known as strictly honest, — but it did startle him a little to have it brought to him just now in the very midst of his grumble. He could almost fancy that one of the good angels had poured it down from heaven in a sudden gush of pity for little lame Sandro.

He dropped the money into his pocket for safety. Where had the child found it?

he wondered. In a drawer perhaps, or she might have picked somebody's purse, the baby-robber! Babies will do such things, and it is no sin.

Well, what of it? Money was plenty over there at Mr. Dunlee's — that is, it seemed so to Mick, who was very poor — money was plenty over there, and no one would miss this little handful.

He looked across the way again. A lady — it was Aunt Vi — sat by a window reading. Wee Lucy stood on the door-stone dressing an uneasy kitten in a cream-colored linen "yum yum."

"*She* won't remember what she did with the money. She may tell some kind of a story, but who'd mind the word of a little tot like that? Now, what if I"—

He moved the mower very fast. "What if I — I don't mean to keep it! I'm only fooling with myself; I'm only thinking, what if I

*should* keep it, and buy a little go-cart for my Sandro? Would anybody know the difference? Would it do anybody any harm?"

Mick whirled around quickly, as if a dozen wasps were stinging him in the face.

"Now, look here, Mick Pico," said he to himself, "what do you mean? What makes you let such bad thoughts come into your head? It's bad thoughts that make bad deeds. Stop thinking this minute."

And with that he held his breath, and drove the lawn-mower with all his might. Aunt Vi, who happened to see him from her window in the blue tower, thought he acted like a crazy man.

But Mick was not crazy. He had only been tempted to do wrong, and it made him wildly unhappy. In a minute or two he was calm and quiet; he had made up his mind.

As soon as Mr. and Mrs. Dunlee reached their own door, coming back from their

drive, Mick crossed the street, bowed, hat in hand, and respectfully handed Mrs. Dunlee the money "little Miss" had presented.

Mrs. Dunlee thanked him with a merry laugh, only thinking what queer things her baby was always doing.

Mick's handsome dark face lighted. "She takes me for a gentleman," he thought. "She doesn't look surprised at me for giving back the money. *She* knows I'm an honest fellow."

As he returned to his work he heard Mrs. Dunlee say to her husband, —

"Yes, that is Mick Pico. What a good face he has!"

"Lucky she didn't know what I was thinking of just now," thought Mick. "I was only fooling with myself, though."

But it did not end here. When Mrs. Porter rode back with her ponies, Mrs. Dunlee met her in the driveway, and told her, still laughing, how Lucy had been scattering

money over her lawn, and how Mick Pico had brought it back to its owner.

"He is a good, honest, hard-working man," said Mrs. Dunlee; "and I am interested in him because he has a little lame son."

"Oh, is he the father of that lame Sandro? I've seen the little fellow and pitied him, but I never knew Mick Pico was his father."

As Mrs. Porter spoke, her eye chanced to fall on the baby-carriage by the fence.

"The children are always filling this old carriage with stones and all sorts of rubbish, and leaving it about in the way," said she. "They've all outgrown it, and I've a great mind to give it to Sandro. Do you suppose it's big enough for him?"

"Yes, indeed. Sandro is very, very small for his age, you know."

Thus it came about that Mick Pico was made the happiest man in town that night. He forgot he was tired when he wheeled

home the velvet-lined, roomy "go-cart" to his beloved little Sandro.

The Picos did not know that Lucy had been the means of their good fortune; and Lucy did not know it either. It was one of her "happy accidents," like spying the fire "top of the house."

Much of Lucy's behavior was very troublesome, and would have been naughty if she had been older and known any better. But it seems as if a good guardian angel must follow the footsteps of little children to turn their mistakes into blessings.

Even this miserable, trying visit to Aunt Sally, ending with a nap on the closet-shelf, was the means of something pleasant to wee Lucy and indeed to Mrs. Pope and Biddy.

Do you smell this "something pleasant" in the air, all sweet and spicy? Do you taste it on your tongue?

You will when you have read the next chapter.

# X

## POLLY DOLLY AND SOLLY DOLLY

AFTER Lucy had gone home from Mrs. Pope's that day, Aunt Sally and Bridget were both of them very tired, as you may fancy.

"To bed you'll go, mum, I *hope*, as soon as ever you eat your dinner," said Bridget.

And Mrs. Pope went. She was still "all of a tremble," she said, though soft, happy smiles kept creeping over her face as she remembered that darling wee Lucy was safe after all.

When the blind lady had had her nap and come back to the parlor, Bridget, having washed and put away the dishes, came in and stood before her a whole minute with

out speaking. Mrs. Pope could not see how her mouth kept twitching at the corners, but knew by the way Biddy cleared her throat that there was something on her mind.

"There's new coal on the range, mum; and if you don't object, where's the harm in my making a fruit-cake for the baby, seeing as I was the one that shut her up in the closet and scared folks so. Ugh! to think of our having that policeman here and the whole Pauly family!"

"Not the least harm in a cake, Bridget, if you're not too tired to make one," replied Mrs. Pope, laying down her knitting a moment. "Not the least harm. Only be sure you make a noble large one, and stuff it as full as it will hold with raisins and currants and citron and all the nice things. That baby's the joy of my heart, Biddy Fling."

Biddy laughed at that, and put the corner of her apron to her eye.

"And the joy of mine, too, mum," said she, walking off with a springing step.

It was late in the afternoon when she brought in the cake fresh from the oven, and let her mistress smell it and touch it.

"I knew it would turn out a wonder, Bridget, and do you credit. Why, the very odor of it puts me in high spirits at once."

"Thank you, mum. And now I'm thinking," said Biddy, clearing her throat again, "I'm thinking, would it do to frost it?"

"Frost it? 'Twould be a pity if you didn't, Bridget! Frost it as white as the driven snow. You know how the snow looks, Bridget, in the State of New York? You know how it looks here sometimes on the tops of the far-off mountains? Well, frost the cake as white as that."

"Indeed, I will, mum, so I will!"

"And see here, Bridget, trace Lucy's name on the top of the cake with little red candy drops."

Biddy was in raptures. But Mrs. Pope had forgotten that the woman could not spell.

When the cake was brought in again next morning with great pride, Mrs. Pope ran her fingers over the name and it was "LOOCY."

"Beautiful! The baby will be so pleased," said she; and in her kindness would not tell Biddy there were too many letters in the name. If she had done so, perhaps Biddy would have said the darling deserved them all and a dozen more!

Now, did Lucy do such a very brave thing when she slipped into a closet and went to sleep? But Mrs. Pope and Biddy both seemed to think she ought to be rewarded for it by a frosted cake. Wasn't it droll?

Mr. and Mrs. Dunlee laughed when the pretty box was brought in that morning with

the round spice-cake inside, as white as the snow on the far-off mountains. The children laughed too, and Aunt Vi; and so did Mr. Henry Sanford, who was there helping Aunt Vi wind worsteds.

But Lucy, being allowed to open the box herself, laughed loudest of all.

"A letter cake, a letter cake," she shouted.

"It has letters enough surely," said papa. "Did Aunt Sally send it to you for being a good girl?"

Lucy had no doubt of it. "Yes, oh, yes, papa."

"What did you do there yesterday that was good?" asked Sister Kyzie. "Didn't you set the water running in Biddy's sink?"

"Y-e-e-s."

"Didn't you pour Biddy's pudding into the ash-barrel?"

"'Haps I did. I didn't mean to."

"And then you went to sleep in the

closet," struck in Jimmy; "you're a queer baby."

"I wish people would give *me* a cake when I go visiting and act a little naughty — not half so naughty as that," said Edith.

But Lucy did not mind these remarks. All she thought of was that she wanted a knife that very minute for mamma to cut the precious cake; mamma could cut it best.

"And, mamma, please cut a big piece for my play-maiden," she exclaimed, as the knife went into the cake. "And a *great* big piece for you and papa and *all* the folks. Oh, I see little Sandro; he's out there in a little carriage, lame Sandro; *he* must have a piece."

Lucy was very generous. If the cake had only been large enough, everybody in the world would have had a share.

Dear baby! That night she added to her

prayer another blessing, which warmed poor Biddy Fling's old heart through and through when she heard of it:—

"Please bless B'idget; can't hear. Made me a booful frosty letter cake."

Spring came; and now Lucy and her little play-maiden were allowed to roam about and gather the pretty wild flowers, which nodded their heads on all the valleys, hills, and plains. Only some one must always go with the little girls lest they might get lost.

"Why you s'pose we can't go all alone, 'thout anybody?" said wee Lucy, scowling one day as they walked up a steep hill behind Kyzie. "*We* wouldn't get lost."

"They fink we're very little," replied Betty. "We *used* to be little long time ago."

"I know it," Lucy's lip curled, "very little. Once I runned away when my mamma wouldn't let me go; and after that she tied me with a string. Don't you 'member?"

"Yes, long time ago."

"I don't know *when* ago, but I wasn't big's I am now, no indeed! I wouldn't run away *now!*"

"Course you wouldn't," responded Betty. "Nor me either. If we should run away we might fall in a canyon and get all lost."

A canyon is a deep hollow with very steep sides.

"'Tis awful to get lost," said Lucy, clutching Betty's hand still tighter. "If folks got lost all da-ay long they'd die of *hungrincss;* don't you fink?" Hungriness was a long new word. Lucy felt quite proud of it.

Kyzie was listening to this artless prattle and laughing all to herself, but she did not turn her head.

"Kyzie's a great big girl," went on Lucy, "but she doesn't take care of her little sister *any.*"

"No," said Betty, "*I* take care o' you, and

you take care o' me. What'll we do when I go to Sandy Barberer?"

"Oh, don't go 'way off there, don't go," exclaimed Lucy.

There had been many a pang at her little heart on hearing the name of Santa Barbara, but she had almost forgotten to think of it now.

"I've got to go," sighed Betty; "mamma says we're going next week. But we sha'n't stay always. Only three, four months."

"Three, four months is '*most* always," returned poor Lucy. To a tiny child like her, —

"Each small minute is a year."

After this Lucy pulled up flowers by the roots and threw them away, even her pet baby-blue-eyes; she did not seem to know what she was doing.

"Going off, 'way off. Oh, dear," she kept repeating to herself, with tears in her eyes.

Perhaps Betty did not grieve so much as Lucy did. It was sad to leave Lucy; still, she was going to a strange new country on a visit, and that consoled her.

Four days after this Lucy sat in Aunt Vi's room in the tower sewing on a piece of green cambric.

"Polly and Solly, look up here and see what I'm doing," said Lucy to her two married dolls that lay flat on the floor.

"And what *are* you doing?" asked Aunt Vi.

"I'se making a bag, auntie."

"A bag? For what, little dear?"

"To put Polly and Solly in and carry 'em down to Betty's house. Yes, I am."

So Lucy drew the needle in and out, in and out, but never made a stitch, for there was no knot in her thread.

Aunt Vi was mending gloves, the kitty was playing with a ball of yarn under a chair, and nobody spoke for just two minutes.

Then Lucy said, "I love my little play-maiden. I wish my little play-maiden wouldn't go away. Betty's papa's cow is carried off. Betty's little burro is carried off. Betty 'n I used to ride on that burro."

"Yes, I know," said auntie.

"Mrs. Chick's there, *my* Mrs. Chick; she's put their things in the trunk. They're going off in cars to-morrow; baby too!"

There was a piteous sound in Lucy's voice.

"Let's see," said Aunt Vi, talking very fast, fearing Lucy would cry, "will Betty take all her dollies with her? How many has she?"

"Betty *had* two dollies; baby Benny broke 'em all up. She hasn't any single dolly now, only a rag dolly like Fibby — all black — an awful dolly! Got buttons in her eyes, got yarn in her hair — oh, that dolly's awful!"

Lucy drew out her thread again, and looked at her own babies on the floor, the ones

given her by Amos Santa Claus Jones. How beautiful! No yarn on *their* heads; *they* had yellow, silky hair. They wore blue shoes and striped frocks, and were grown up and very polite.

"And mamma said I might!"

Here Lucy sprang up, overturning her cricket.

"Won't Betty be *so* glad!"

"Glad of what?" asked Aunt Vi.

"Why, I'm going to give her Polly Dolly and Solly Dolly; mamma said I might!"

The happy thought made Lucy's blue eyes very pleasant. But she was a tiny girl; Aunt Vi wondered if she really knew what she wanted to do.

Mamma came in with some white paper in her hand. She took up the married dollies and began to wrap them in the paper. Lucy stood and looked on with a finger in her mouth.

"W-e-ll, we-ll," said she, slowly and sadly, "but what dollies will *I* have to play with when Polly and Solly's gone away?"

"You have two with bonnets and feathers," replied mamma. "And then there is Phebe."

"Those isn't mallied, mamma, and Fibby's sick."

Aunt Vi pitied Lucy.

"Don't urge her, Prudy," she said. "'Tis hard for her to give away her best dolls."

"Oh, I love my Betty, my Betty loves me. She's my play-maiden. I *want* to give 'em to her."

"But you like them better than your nice dollies," said mamma.

"Betty likes 'em better, too, mamma."

"But are you sure you want to give them to her?"

"Yes, I want to, just as *sure!*"

Still, as Lucy looked at the white bundles in her mother's hands, she sighed.

"Their names isn't Polly Dolly Dunlee any more; it's Polly Dolly *Davis;* and that's what their names is. Do you fink Betty'll be glad?"

"Yes, very, very glad. But if you're sorry, she won't be glad."

For dear little Lucy was wiping away a tear.

"I don't want to carry 'em to Betty yet, mamma, not yet!"

After dinner she said,—

"May I wait till morning? Then I'll carry my dollies to Betty."

"Oh, yes, wait till morning. And then if you do not choose to do it, don't carry them at all."

When Lucy said her prayer that night, kneeling by her mother's side, she added these words very earnestly: "Dear *good* Lord, make me willing to give Polly and Solly to my little play-maiden, and not want 'em *myse'f.* Amen."

Was it not a touching little prayer? Mamma thought so. It thrilled her heart as she heard it.

"Dear child, what a struggle she is having! But I will not say another word; she must settle it for herself," thought Mrs. Dunlee, as she tucked wee Lucy into her crib with a loving kiss, and a "Good-night, darling, a sweet good-night."

## XI

### MRS. CHICK'S TURKEY

THE moment Lucy was dressed next morning she took up the white bundle from her own little table, where it had lain all night, and said smiling,—

"Now I's goin', mayn't I, mamma?"

"What, before breakfast? Go, if you like."

Lucy trudged down the hill to Betty's house. Betty stood in the doorway, both hands full of silvertips and baby-blue-eyes. Perhaps she thought wild flowers did not grow where she was going.

"Good-by, how you do?" called out Lucy. "I've bringed you sumfin; I've bringed you my mallied dollies!"

"I've bringed you sumfin." **Page 142.**

"Oh, did you give 'em all to me, *all* to me?" cried Betty, dropping the silvertips and baby-blue-eyes on the door-stone, and seizing and hugging the parcel Lucy had brought.

"Yes, I gived 'em to you, Solly and Polly, both of 'em, I did. Good-by, *I's willing!*"

Betty laughed, — she had been very sober before, — laughed all over her innocent face. Her mother wrote afterwards to Mrs. Dunlee, —

"The dolls made Betty happy all the way to Santa Barbara."

Lucy cried when she heard of it. Was it for Betty, or for the pretty married babies she had lost? But next moment she laughed through her tears.

"I love my play-maiden, I do! I'm glad I gived her my best dollies, so I am!"

One day Aunt Jessie and Uncle Ben invited Lucy and Jimmy to Lincoln Heights

for a three days' visit. Mrs. Dunlee was glad to let them go, because Lucy missed Betty, and was rather lonely without her.

"I wish I was going too. What a gay time you'll have!" said Edith. If she had known who would be at Uncle Ben's with them she would have wished more than ever to go.

It was dear, good, fat, funny Mrs. Chick, who lived on a ranch in Ovando valley. She drove up in her wagon not two hours after the children arrived at Uncle Ben's.

Now, of all things in the world what do you suppose Mrs. Chick brought with her when she came visiting that day?

A brood of turkeys! Yes, she did! She could not leave them at home, for there was no one there to feed them. She lived all alone. Besides, those turkeys were used to going visiting and they liked it.

Mrs. Pauly laughed when she saw them

coming. They were in the back of the wagon, poking their heads through the slats of their coop to look out and admire the country, while Mrs. Chick sat up straight and stout, driving the gray horse.

"Oh! Oh!" cried all the children, running out to look.

"It's *my* Mrs. Chick!" cried Lucy.

They all loved the good woman, and besides it was great fun to watch those six turkeys as they were let out of prison. They strutted about, looking as proud as if they owned the yard and the ranch and the whole State of California.

"One of them I raised on purpose for you, Mrs. Pauly — that big gobbler," said the stout woman, as soon as she had recovered her breath, and taken off her bonnet.

When she was seated, wee Lucy came and stood beside her chair. She had often wondered if Mrs. Chick was stuffed all over with

pincushions; if not, what did give her such a puffy look?

"She talks very fast for a fat woman," thought the wise child. "I should fink her face would ache."

While the widow spoke of her lemon-trees and orange-trees, Lucy gently stroked her hand; it was soft like a baby's, and had grown so plump that Mrs. Chick wore her wedding-ring on her little finger.

Lucy touched the ring. Would it come off? She twirled it around slowly. Oh, yes; it would come off very easily.

"Lucy," said Aunt Jessie, "what are you doing? You must not meddle with Mrs. Chick's ring."

Lucy blushed, and put her hands behind her. Mrs. Chick had not seemed to notice what she was doing.

"Why, where did you get that fur rug?" she was saying.

"Mr. Pauly shot a wild cat that was eating our chickens," replied Mrs. Pauly.

"Yes, and now I can jump on him 'thout him squealing," said little Lucy, dancing up and down on the rug. But Mrs. Chick began to talk about her roses, and said, —

"One hundred and ninety-five different varieties, if you'll believe it, Mrs. Pauly."

Then Lucy stole up once more to play with the ring. It came off now; but Mrs. Chick drew it on again, still talking. Lucy drew it off the second time, and Mrs. Chick let it lie in her lap. Lucy took it up and put it, first on one of her own fingers, then on another; but no one observed it, and no one knew when she left the room to go to play with the other children. Mrs. Chick was then deep in the subject of horned toads.

But half an hour afterward she stopped talking, and exclaimed, —

"Bless me, where's my ring?"

It was not on her finger, it was not on her lap. Lucy was sent for.

"What have you been doing with Mrs. Chick's ring?" asked her Aunt Jessie sternly. "I forbade you to touch it."

Lucy began to cry.

"I fink I put it on my fumb," was all she could say, and all she seemed to remember.

Everybody hunted everywhere all the rest of the day, but still it could not be found.

"The dear child meant no harm," said Mrs. Chick, trying to smile, for she was a kind woman and did not wish any one made unhappy.

But Lucy went around the house moaning to herself, "Oh, de-ar, de-ar me!"

She had been disobedient, she was in disgrace; and there was no one to comfort her. Why didn't Jimmy take her in his arms as he always did when she was unhappy and say, —

"Poor wee Lucy!"

She crept up to him, and took his arms herself and placed them about her neck. But he thought she had done very wrong; he only frowned at her, and would not say, "Poor Lucy."

Sukey was making ice-cream; but Lucy was sure if she should eat it all and all the cake, it would not make her happy. Oh, no! for nobody loved her.

She wandered into the kitchen next morning. Sukey was dressing the big turkey.

"Go call your auntie," said Sukey, looking up all at once and smiling. Lucy ran and called her.

A long time afterward, when Sukey had "setted the table," they all went in to dinner. And, behold, right beside Mrs. Chick's plate was her own lost wedding-ring!

The gobbler had picked it up in the yard and swallowed it, thinking, probably, that it was a new kind of yellow corn.

Mrs. Chick laughed, with tears in her eyes, and kissed Lucy, though I'm sure I don't know why. She loved that wedding-ring more than she had cared to say.

It turned out a very jolly dinner, far jollier than had been expected. Uncle Ben said he never before heard of a turkey that made so many people happy.

"Good enough for Thanksgiving," said Ada and Fanny and Charley and Phil.

While the ice-cream was being served, Lucy whispered to Jimmy, —

"I was a naughty girl, and I didn't feel happy; but wasn't that turkey a piggy-wiggy to eat up his mamma's gold ring!"

On going home next day from their visit, Jimmy burst into the house exclaiming, —

"O mamma, we had a turkey with a gold ring in it, — better'n a Thanksgiving turkey."

Lucy drew back a little; she was afraid her brother was about to tell of her naughty be-

havior. But Jimmy was more of a gentleman than that.

He began at once to speak of the ride he had taken on the back of Mrs. Chick's horse.

"He's a slow thing, I can tell you. He's a good stopper, but he isn't much of a goer."

As soon as Lucy saw her mother alone, she told her the whole story of the ring, and said she would never meddle like that again, and I really think she spoke the truth.

The Davis family did not come back to their home for four months. A great many things happened in those four months, and Lucy thought she would remember them all and tell them to Betty. One thing she was sure to remember — how could she forget it? — there was a new baby in the house. Lucy found him one day when she came back from Aunt Sally Pope's. He was in Aunt Jessie's lap on a pillow.

"This is your little brother," said Aunt Jessie.

"Why — ee!" said Lucy.

But he shut his eyes and went to sleep while she was saying "How do you do?"

Jimmy overlooked this want of manners, and shouted, —

"I've got a playmate now! I've got a playmate!"

I am sorry to say that at first, and indeed for some time, Lucy was not well pleased with the little stranger. I think she felt toward him very much as she had felt long ago toward her mother's guitar. She did not like to have any one rock the little Edward, or sing to him, or kiss him. She wanted all the kisses herself. And then, too, she was afraid her mamma would forget to love *her* now that the new baby had come. Silly little Lucy! This was a sad mistake. "Mother-love is as high as the mountain, as

deep as the sea." Mrs. Dunlee's heart was large enough to hold and care for all her dear children, though there were five of them now instead of four.

Lucy could not understand this; but by and by she began to think how cunning the new baby was with his soft blue eyes and tiny hands and feet. She was learning to be glad he had come; and once she hid her face in his little bosom, and her mother heard her whisper, —

"I love mamma, I love papa, I love you, and I love God."

This made Mrs. Dunlee very happy. If there were only love in Lucy's heart all would be well.

When Betty came home, Lucy showed her the new brother with great pride.

"He came way down from heaven," she said, " but he didn't bring any roses."

And now I will tell you one more adven-

ture that befell wee Lucy, and that will bring us to the end of our story. If we ever hear of her again it will be in another book which chiefly concerns her older brother, to be named for him "Jimmy-boy."

## XII

### "MAYN'T I GO TOO"

ONE day almost all the Dunlees were away from home. Papa and mamma had driven out with Edith and the baby, Aunt Vi was visiting, and Jimmy riding with his burro. It was Molly O'Connor's "afternoon out," so it chanced that Kyzie and little Lucy were left alone in the house in Kyzie's chamber, and Kyzie had hurt her foot and had to keep it in a chair.

"I never did see such a good little girl as me," said wee Lucy, talking away to herself. "Here I is a-sewing and a-sewing. *I* don't go out to play any a-*tall*."

"No; you like to stay here with poor, lame Kyzie, don't you, Baby-blue-eye?"

Lucy looked up and smiled. She always smiled when she was called Baby-blue-eye.

"Well, I's tired of sitting still. Now I want to go to see Betty. Mayn't I go, Kyzie?"

Kyzie did not answer. She did not know what to say. Would mamma think it quite safe to let Lucy go alone? She might take a fancy to run away.

"Can't I go, Kyzie? Isn't I a good little girl?"

Still Kyzie did not answer.

"But Betty wants to see me dreffly."

Tears were in Lucy's eyes. Kyzie could not bear to see her cry; she looked out of the window. Mrs. Davis's house was in plain sight about a block and a half away down the hill. Not very far, surely, and Lucy often went there alone.

"If I let you go, will you come back in an hour?"

"Oh, yes, Kyzie; yes, I will."

"Then you may go. But tell Mrs. Davis you must come home at two o'clock."

"Two er'clock, *two* er'clock, yes, Kyzie, yes, I will," cried Lucy; and hugging her doll, Biddy Fling, she ran merrily away, followed by the gray and white kitten.

Kyzie watched from the chamber window till she saw the two little girls, Betty and Lucy, go into Mrs. Davis's house with their hands full of roses and callas.

"She's safe," said Kyzie. "And now I'll lie down a minute and rest my foot. What made me go and lame myself so, falling over that cradle?"

When Mrs. Dunlee came home with the baby she found Kyzie fast asleep; but where was Lucy? It was half-past two o'clock. The sun was shining with a bright glare upon the vase of roses in the window, and upon the kitty curled up in the armed

chair; but where was Baby-blue-eye? When Kyzie awoke she did not know what it meant.

"I let her go to see Betty," said she. "Do you think I did wrong? But I told her to come back at two o'clock."

"It is half-past two o'clock now, and more," said Mrs. Dunlee. "I'll go and bring her home."

She went to Mrs. Davis's; and there was little Betty sitting on the front doorstep under the passion-flower, eating a fig.

"Where is Lucy?" asked Mrs. Dunlee.

"Oh, she went off long time ago," said Betty, eating another fig.

Mrs. Dunlee looked surprised.

"Where did she go, Betty?"

"I fought she went home. Didn't she go home? I fought she did."

Then Mrs. Davis came to the inside door with a spoon in her hand.

"I've been in the kitchen making fig preserves," said she; "but when I heard the clock strike two I called out to Lucy, and told her to run home, for that was the time that Kyzie had set. And I thought she went. At any rate, I know I did not hear the children talking after that."

"I've searched my house all over, and she certainly is not there. Where can she be?" said Mrs. Dunlee, turning to go.

"She may have taken a fancy to go up to Lincoln Heights, to her Uncle Ben's," suggested Mrs. Davis.

Mrs. Dunlee's face grew suddenly white.

"I hope not, oh, I hope not! She doesn't know the way up there. She might wander round the outskirts of the city, and get lost in a canyon."

A canyon is only a valley, and not much to be dreaded; but as one canyon leads into another, it would be easy for a little child

to get bewildered in one of these deep places, and lost.

Mrs. Dunlee did not suppose any real harm would befall Lucy, but could not bear to think how frightened the baby would be, as she strayed about like a little lost lamb.

"Oh, I thought she'd be at Mrs. Davis's!" said Kyzie, wringing her hands. "If she has run away, there's no knowing where to look for her. She may have strayed off to Mexico."

Mexico was not so very far away; but Kyzie thought it must be a bad place because it is outside of the United States. At any rate, she was sure it was too far for Lucy to go there all alone; and so it was, quite too far indeed.

"I heard her say once to Betty Davis, 'Kyzie's a great big girl, but she doesn't take care 'f her little sister *any!*' I shouldn't think I did!"

Mr. Dunlee was sent for from the sick bed of dear Aunt Sally Pope; and he and Mr. Sanford and two policemen and Mrs. Dunlee and Molly travelled all over the city, and beyond it — though not quite to Mexico.

An hour or so later they met at Mr. Dunlee's house to say the child was not found yet, and what should be done next?

Ever so many neighbors came in, for they all loved Lucy and wanted to help.

"She hasn't run away before for ever so long," said Edith; "what made her do it now?"

"I'm sure she didn't mean to," replied Kyzie. "She was picking flowers, maybe, and forgot."

Jimmy-boy thought of the wee child lost and crying somewhere, and longed to put his arms about her neck and say, "Poor Lucy."

Mrs. Dunlee by this time was in real dis-

tress, though she tried to seem calm for the sake of her children. She did not trust herself to speak; and her husband noticed that her lips were firmly pressed together, and her face was very white.

And Kyzie! They all pitied her so, for she could not go out to hunt with the others, she could only sit and hold the baby and moan, —

"Oh, why did I let her go?"

Yet no one thought her in the least to blame.

"I'll tell you what we'll do. Listen all of you," said Uncle Ben, swinging his hat to call everybody's attention. "We'll put some crackers in our pockets so that we can be gone from home till after tea-time; and we'll strike out in twelve different directions; and then, if nobody finds her we'll go out again this evening to the ends of the earth with lanterns."

"*Mayn't I go too?*" piped up a small voice — a child's voice.

And before anybody could so much as guess whose voice it was, or where it came from, in danced Lucy herself. She had only been taking a nap! And of all the places in the State of California, she had taken it under Kyzie's bed! The talking downstairs had wakened her at last.

They all fell to hugging and kissing her, and calling her a "naughty, precious darling," to her great surprise. What had *she* done? "Nuffin'," as usual. Her mother was in tears, and Kyzie crying as if her heart would break, though they both declared they were "perfectly happy," were "never so happy before in their lives."

Nobody knew when Lucy had come home from Betty Davis's house and crept under Kyzie's bed; but I will tell you: it was quarter-past two. She had been picking flow-

ers by the wayside in the sun, and, feeling tired, — for she had risen much earlier than usual that morning, — she had gone to sleep and slept two hours by the clock.

Kyzie declared she looked more than ever like a baby-blue-eye when she woke; and perhaps that was why they kissed her so much. You always want to kiss a baby-blue-eye when you see it; you can't help wanting to, for it has a tiny face that looks up at you so very dear and sweet. And so did wee Lucy's face.

"No wonder my little daughter is such a favorite," thought Papa Dunlee; "she is one of 'little Prudy's' children."

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"'Please stop,' said Dotty faintly, and the boy came to her, elbowing. 'I want some of that pop-corn so much! I could buy it if you'd hold this baby till I put my hand in my pocket.' The youth laughed, but for the sake of 'making a trade' set down his basket and took the 'enfant terrible.' There was an instant attack upon his hair, which was so long and straggling as to prove an easy prey to the enemy."

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"As Dotty seized two locks of the Major's hair, one in each hand, and pulled them both as if she meant to draw them out by the roots, out they came! Yes, entirely out; and more than that, all the rest of his hair came too. His head was left as smooth as an apple. You see how it was. He wore a wig, and just for play had slyly unfastened it, and allowed Miss Dotty to pull it off. The perfect despair of her little face amused him vastly, but he did not smile; he looked very severe. 'See what you have done,' said he. Major Laydie's entire head of hair lay at her feet, as brown and wavy as ever it was. Dotty looked at it with horror. The idea of scalping a man."

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